Sanford H. Smith.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Photographs.

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION
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INTRODUCTION.

THE author of the following Sketches, is widely known, — first, as a successful Sabbath School Missionary; secondly, as a Pastor, who, in his own church, has given special attention to the cultivation of this department of the field of ministerial labor; and, lastly, as a writer, who has most happily "photographed," for the use of others, the results of his own observation and experience. His pictures are so life-like as to have caused some almost ludicrous mistakes; persons of whom the author had never heard, and living in various and widely distant States, often imagining themselves to have sat for the portraits; and in some instances, sending angry complaints to the editor about the supposed personalities. As these papers all appeared originally in the "*Sunday School Times*," I

have had a good opportunity of judging both of their merits and of their acceptance with the public; and I think I am safe in saying, that no series of articles, that has appeared in that paper, has attracted more attention among Sabbath School men, or been more generally approved, or whose republication has been more frequently called for. They deserve to take their place among the permanent literature of the cause. The volume which contains them is one which ought to finds its way upon the table of every Sabbath School man, and of every friend of Sabbath Schools.

JOHN S. HART.

Philadelphia, January, 1864.

CONTENTS.

SUPERINTENDENTS.

TEACHERS.

SCHOLARS.

SPEAKERS.

SUPERINTENDENTS.

CHAPTER I.

The Fidgety Superintendent.

THIS person is constitutionally uneasy. He is in a stew at home, at his place of business, and wherever else he goes. He never was thoughtfully calm for five minutes at a time. He unwittingly puts into a stew those with whom he associates or has business. It would be well if, in putting on his Sunday clothes, he could clothe himself with a garb of quiet dignity, but he cannot. So he brings his every-day manners and customs with him, as he comes to the discharge of his official duties in the Sunday School. His entrance into the school-room introduces a general

odor of disquietude and restlessness. He seems to have been shaved with a dull razor, or bitten by venomous insects. Probably both. As he constantly boils over on the subject of punctuality, he is careful not to be after the time for the opening of school. But he hurriedly bolts into the school-room just as the clock is on the strike, and as hurriedly arranges his affairs, so that the opening of the school may at once proceed.

His opening exercises are as when a can of fermented presèrves is opened. Great ebulition; little orderly propriety. His ways are different. Sometimes a hymn, a chapter, a prayer. Sometimes a hymn, a prayer, a chapter. Sometimes no chapter, sometimes no prayer. Generally without the care in selection and arrangement which is desirable. Always lacking in that spirit of earnest devotion which should mark every religious exercise. The school is opened, or rather torn open, in such a manner as to jar the religious feelings of all right-minded teachers.

The exercises of study are due, but the impetuous official has a notice to give, or a new regulation to announce. He rings the bell with violence, and failing to gain the attention he desires, thumps on the desk with a stick till enough noise is made to cause everybody to look and listen. The notice or regulation is an unimportant one, which might have been otherwise disposed of. The Library duties, contrived as awkwardly as possible, are then attended to. Five adjutant superintendents, under the name of secretaries, then march round, attending to the roll, which our fidgety friend might as well do himself, but for the fact that he does not see how one man can do so much work.

The school is fairly set in motion. Not the stately and dignified motion of the well freighted and balanced ocean-steamer, but the nervous wriggling of the little unballasted skiff, which a flaw of wind may upset at any moment. A constant buzz is heard when the superintendent moves round. Not the buzz

of the busy bee, children industriously studying and reciting; but something more like the buzzing of a family of hornets, as he goes from class to class, stimulating teachers and scholars with some ever new species of worry. The boys are a special plague to him. The girls constantly minister to his vexation. As for his teachers, never were such an inefficient set known to be in any one school. The ventilating apparatus distresses him. The arrangement of the shutters and blinds requires his unremitting attention. He flutters at the stove, and disturbs the school by making a noise with the poker. He bothers the librarian until that officer is on the point of resigning. The sexton is his natural enemy.

The fidgety superintendent has no lack of rules and regulations. In fact, he has too many; enough for several Sunday Schools. He has so many that it is impossible to enforce a quarter of them. Some of them conflict with others. Most of them are the product of his own unassisted wisdom. Some

of them have been extemporized for particular occasions. For instance, when a boy (not too able bodied) has behaved badly, the school is reminded of the rule that all such boys so behaving, shall be made an example of, by being temporarily imprisoned in the coal-cellar. With strong cries and great hustling, the evil-doer is thus made an example of, the bigger boys wishing that he had tried it on them, that they might see whether boy or superintendent would go to that dimly lighted place of punishment. The school is thrown into confusion. Superintendent declares that among such a set it is impossible to keep order, and that the school is rapidly going to destruction. So it is. And if the teachers value the school, and think it worth saving, the best thing they can do is to call a special meeting, unanimously request Mr. Fidgety to consider himself put out, and then elect a wiser and more placid man in his place.

CHAPTER II.

The Heavy Superintendent.

HE is a good man, but very dull. A man of considerable ability in some things. Not necessarily an old man, though sometimes chronologically exempt from active service. He means well. He wants to do as well as he knows how, for the welfare of the school. He has the respect and affection of the minister and good people of the church. He is a respectable man, and a respectable superintendent. But he puts the children to sleep. The Sunday School slumbers under his ponderous administration.

He leads the school along in one old rut, the same rut that it always has travelled in. The old rut is worn not wide, but deep. So deep that the superintendent stands in it up to his eyes and ears. He can neither see

nor hear what is going on outside of it. It would be impossible for him to drive out of it. The school sings the same hymns, learns the same lessons, prays the same prayers, uses the same books, that it did twenty years ago. These met the requirements of that day, and why should they not of the present? If any teacher, scholar, or friend suggests an improvement or alteration in any of the old established modes of conducting affairs, he is met with the serious, apprehensive face of this solid man, so suggestive of the peril the school would run by stepping out of the path of ancient precedent, that he is at once struck with a deep sense of his audacity in suggesting that which if carried out, would have hurried the whole concern to disgraceful ruin.

The school is a small one. The scholars are those who have been born in it, or have naturally wandered into it. Most of them go from force of habit. They have been told it is right to go to Sunday School. They do not go because they are interested. There is

nothing to excite especial interest in the childish mind. They are tolerably well behaved, orderly, stagnant children. There is no missionary effort, no lively energy in the school. Some exhuberant young converts once tried it, but the heavy head went to the pastor, and asked him if he thought they had better, and he thought they had better not, and so they wilted into submissive inactivity.

The congregation are aware of the existence of this school. They know it in two ways. They see the children coming out of it when church begins; and they have the opportunity of contributing something to the yearly collection which is taken up for its expenses. This is all they know about it. The children are not numerous enough to make a disturbance, nor the expense great enough to necessitate a large collection. It is an inoffensive Sunday School.

This heavy superintendent is regular and punctual in all that he does. He has never

been late. He has never been flurried in the performance of his duty. He never failed to write up his record-book neatly with ink, and yet without blots. His absence or irregularity would be as quickly noticed as would the absence or want of perpendicularity of the church steeple. Departure from his usual unruffled dignity would be as novel as the cracking of a joke by the pastor in the pulpit.

In conducting the exercises of the school, our friend is stately and solemn. The prayer at the opening is fifteen minutes long. Although efforts have been made to keep the children in devotional attitude and silence during its continuance, they have been attended with only partial success. But the heaviest of all exercises is when the good man makes "a few remarks," commencing with "My dear young friends." If the "remarks" are prolonged as they generally are, many of the "dear young friends" have to be waked up at their close, and even some of the younger teachers yield to the general feeling of

heaviness. These symptoms of weariness fail to ruffle the composure of the speaker, or to bring the "remarks" to a close a moment before their natural expiration.

The time of usefulness of this respectable old seventy-four ship-of-the-line has run out. A less clumsy craft, even though of less depth, and lighter equipment, would be more available for the work of the present day. Let our fossil superintendent either go out of service, as a well-used and time-worn monument of the past, or else let him get himself razeed, pitch overboard his weighty old smooth-bores, and rig himself with all the modern rifled improvements, and iron-clad sides. Then, in the Master's strength, he will be able not only to sail in the shallow waters where the enemy of souls is to be met, but to send into his sides such telling shots, as will cause the school to give thanks to God for the new efficiency with which they commence in earnest to "fight the good fight of faith."

CHAPTER III.

The Consequential Superintendent.

HE is an elder or vestryman of the church. A well-to-do merchant, a judge of the supreme court, or a bank cashier. He has railroad stock in his safe, and money to his credit in bank. Lives in a fine house, drives excellent horses, and sits in the front pew, middle aisle, into which his family come regularly five minutes after the minister has commenced service. For these reasons, and not on account of any particular fitness for the post, this gentleman has been elected superintendent of the Sunday School. Very great is the honor which he has conferred on the church and Sunday School by his acceptance. In the "brief remarks" which he made on the occasion, he told them that they must not look to him for any great amount of labor in the duties

connected with the administration of the school. The school should have his influence and his sympathy.

Prior to the election of this superintendent, the school had been somewhat run down. The former superintendent was a plain young man, pious, but lacking in those qualifications which would enable him to make his Sunday School a first-class institution in the eyes of the congregation. The school needed influence, sympathy, and a long pocket.

Our consequential superintendent has come up nobly to the relief of the school's embarrassments. Feeling his own credit and character involved, he has paid for the books bought on credit eighteen months ago, and for the stoves purchased last winter. He has also removed the annoyance caused by the duns of the coal dealer for his little bill, the fuel represented by which was consumed last winter. But with this liberality comes a new embarrassment, worse than mere debt. The gentleman considers that he has a moral

mortgage on the school. The kindness he has done it can never be repaid. He makes no secret of the success of his efforts to save it from ruin. In fact, he seems to own the whole establishment. It has his influence and his sympathy. So have the servants in his kitchen and the horses in his stable. And he consults the teachers about as much on the business of the school as he consults his servants or horses on the conduct of his household affairs.

He is tolerably regular and punctual in his attendance. When he is late the school respectfully waits for him. When he is absent, somebody else takes his place. Nobody ventures to suggest to him that he should mend in this respect, for everybody knows that a man of his influence has so much to attend to during the week, which must be properly attended to, that it is impossible for him to attend to anything properly on the Sabbath. Besides, suggestion would give offence to him, which would be impolitic. He might

remind the unreasonable people who find fault, that it is a great favor for him to come at all.

His manner, while on duty, is the manner of a brigadier general. He is not only the superintending overseer of the flock committed to his charge, but he is driver and commander. If he is a large man with a full bass voice, this sets well on him, and produces a fine impression on those who come in to visit the school. If he is a little man with a squeaky voice, it is very ridiculous. The teachers would prefer a less dictatorial manner. The scholars feel that whatever sympathy he may profess to have for them, they cannot get up much for him.

And the Sunday School feels that it has made a bad bargain. It has looked at all the man's qualifications except the right ones, in making selection of him as head officer. He was put in to compliment him. How shall he be got out? Pastor, teachers and friends, put their heads together to invent a way The

way seems as hard to find, and as profitless when found, as the Northwest Passage. The debt of gratitude due him for extricating the school from its pecuniary difficulties, stands as a great iceberg in the way of removing him. It will not do to hurt his feelings. He will leave the church. The church will lose his influence, his sympathy, and his pew rent. That would ruin the church. The only feasible suggestion made for getting rid of him, is to wait till he dies. And that seems a slow way. But the school, in terror of the great man, toils on under his unhappy tyranny, year after year, growing weaker and more disordered, like the dyspeptic who persists in living on indigestible food; until at last, when the change is made by death or voluntary retirement, what is left of the unfortunate school is so enfeebled and rickety, that the work of rebuilding has to be done almost from the foundation.

CHAPTER IV.

The Slovenly Superintendent.

ON Saturday night he omitted to wind his watch. The house clock is off duty by reason of similar omission. There is no time-piece in the house that can show what o'clock it is. So he is a little behind time in coming into school. With toilet partially made, breakfast not quite eaten, and family prayers omitted for want of time, he moves along to his work, one moment hurrying because he is late, the next moment slackening his steps, reflecting that as he has been punctual for two consecutive Sundays, it is no matter if he is late to-day; the school cannot begin before he gets there. "I forgot to wind my watch last night," is the apologetic remark to the knot of teachers and scholars awaiting him at the door. "Why couldn't

he remember about his watch?" is the almost audible thought of the hearers of the lame apology.

Our friend is a good natured, easy soul. He is willing to have things done right, if anybody will do them right. He is not displeased when they go wrong. He says he makes the best of it, and is not going to be worried about what he calls the minor matters of life. His religion is a sort of slip-shod religion. In all his affairs he is down at the heels. There is no arrangement in his counting room or his family. His children rise when they please, get their meals "when it is convenient," hoist their clothes on without much regard to neatness or regularity; and the only thing in which they are all regular, is their late attendance on the means of grace.

It is not to be supposed that the Sunday School which is officered by the slovenly man, is a model of neatness and good order. It partakes of his spirit of inefficiency and lack. There sits a class of seven boys, crowding to

look over two testaments. One dog-eared hymn book is the whole musical apparatus of another class of five well-grown children. Yonder class has been without question books for a month. That class has for a year borrowed catechisms from its next neighbor. The records of several classes have for weeks been kept on soiled slates, because the superintendent "really forgot," each week to get the new class books which he had been promising for some time. One class studies in Mark, another in Hebrews, another in Ezekiel. Each teacher is obliged to try to speak louder than all the other teachers, so as to be heard above the general hum. Hence the general hum is so great that everybody interferes with everybody else. There is no system, no neatness, no order. The whole school is at loose ends. The good-natured superintendent says that he never had any gift for keeping order in school. Nobody offers to contradict him in this opinion.

The record book which is kept by this man,

looks as if one of the younger classes had been using it for a copy book. There are strokes, pot hooks, crosses, smears, and blots. The first page was kept with some neatness. He blotted the second, and then lost his ambition to keep the book nicely. The drawer in his desk contains several disused record books, put out of service on account of the many blots and blunders contained in them. The slovenly superintendent often gives notice from the desk, that the teachers should be more punctual and regular, and that the scholars must be more orderly and obedient. But it is like the fabulous paternal crab, who exhorted his son to go straight instead of crooked. The precept is so barren of example as to carry no force with it, and, like most of this officer's laws and regulations, it is a dead letter. They all know that they ought to do better; so he, too, knows that he ought to mend in almost all his ways.

"Didn't think" is at the bottom of all this well-meaning man's errors. He did not mean

to be untidy, to have a disorderly school or a slatternly record book, to be late, to let his watch run down, or to be generally slovenly. But he fails to be systematically thoughtful about these duties, and continual shortcomings bring forth the ever recurring excuse, "I forgot," or amplified, "I really forgot all about it."

The time of teaching is over. The bell is rudely jangled to cause the learning to stop. No intelligent questioning about the lesson, nor even an announcement of next Sunday's lesson, for each class studies (or omits to study) the lesson of its own selection. But there are sundry notices to be given out, and they serve for closing exercises. Mr. Slovenly announces that there will be a prayer-meeting on Wednesday and lecture on Friday and monthly concert on Monday and the annual pic-nic on Thursday and the funeral of Amanda Jones this afternoon all to commence at half past seven o'clock until further notice.

Of course the teachers remember all these.

No matter, he has given them out, and that is all he has to do with it. The school is then, not exactly dismissed, but rather dispersed. Slovenly goes to his home, intending to make a resolution to institute a general reform. But his good intentions do not come to a head. He forgets them. He blunders on in the same old way, and the school blunders and stumbles along with him, and they will continue to blunder and stumble and forget together, so long as they both shall live.

CHAPTER V.

The Successful Superintendent.

HE is a good superintendent, and therefore successful. A man of intelligence and of some degree of information. He was not elected because of his being a judge, an elder, a deacon, or a bank president, nor because he is the oldest, the youngest, the most popular, or the best looking man in the church. The teachers chose him because of his fitness for the duties of the office. When he was elected, he did not consume half an hour of the precious time of the meeting, in poor apologies and regrets at not being able "to perform in a proper and satisfactory manner, the laborious and responsible duties of the high station and important position in which, by their unanimous and most complimentary action they had placed him." Nor

did he suggest, (all the while meaning to accept,) that Mr. Fidgety, Mr. Heavy, or one of the other candidates who did not get a single vote, could fill the office better than he could. He went at it like an honest man and a Christian.

Regularly and with punctuality has he persevered in the work. He keeps sound overshoes and a good umbrella, and is not compelled to stay at home on rainy days. You can set your watch by his opening and dismissal of the school. He does not forget that the whole body of teachers, old and young, will come late if he is late, and that if he is punctual they will all, excepting two or three incorrigibly heedless ones, be punctual too.

When he arrives at school, it is understood that he has come with a definite purpose, and not to let things straggle along the best way they can. With courteous firmness he goes about the business of the school. He, as pleasantly as possible, corrects what is wrong, according to the best of his ability.

By some apparent magic he smooths down the crusty teacher, and quiets the turbulent one. He has succeeded in bringing to naught the plans of Mr. Books, the Librarian, who in two years has invented fifteen new ways of keeping the library, each worse than its predecessor. He has quieted Mr. Whimsick, the singing man, who bought all the new flash tune-books as soon as published, and insisted that the school should sing them all through. And yet he keeps all these people in a good humor. The boys and girls love him, even if he is a pretty strict disciplinarian. They know that if they are good scholars, discipline will not be exercised on them.

He is neat in his ways. You can examine the record of the school since his election, and find a well-kept and correct history of its transactions. There is a general air of tidiness, and absence of boisterous doings, throughout all the affairs of the school. The whole concern goes like well-oiled clock work.

Not many speeches are heard from the lips of this superintendent, but whenever he opens his mouth he says something worth remembering. He does not talk against time, nor utter great swelling words when he has nothing to say. When a friend or stranger visits the school, burdened with a speech which must be delivered, he endeavors to choose between the man who will instruct the children and the one who will only utter long strung nonsense. Sometimes, however, he makes a mistake, and allows Mr. Windy-wordy to have his say, but is careful not to invite him again.

As a good railroad conductor understands everything about his train, from driving the engine to oiling the car-wheels, and can give wise directions to those whose duty it is to attend to these things, so our superintendent can preside, keep order, teach any class that may be without a teacher, look after the library, do the singing, and even take the place of the sexton in case of necessity. Not

that he does all these at once, or any one of them in a way, or at a time to interfere with others in the discharge of their duty. But he can do them all, and the teachers and scholars know it, and the knowledge does not hurt him in their eyes.

If he were not a man of prayer, he would find it impossible to attain this excellence. But he is in the habit of constant and earnest prayer. Not only are his public prayers well uttered, and edifying to those who are to join in them, but they come from his heart, and God hears them. In his private devotion the school is often the subject of his petitions. He prays that the children may be converted, that the teachers may with humble faithfulness do their duty, and that he may have God's grace and guidance to enable him to be faithful in what he has to do. The spirit of prayerful earnestness is infused into all he does. Persevering energy takes him and the school safely through many difficulties which might otherwise cause a

wreck. His school prospers. The neighboring schools and churches call it a model school, and ask for instructions as to the peculiar system by which it is managed. They hardly believe when they are told that there is no wonderful hocus-pocus about it, but that it is only a school conducted with prayerful zeal, order and simplicity, by a band of wise and faithful teachers, under a good superintendent.

TEACHERS.

CHAPTER VI.

The Heedless Teacher.

AS this gentleman's rule is to dismiss his business from his mind, out of business hours, so he forgets on Sunday night that there is such an institution as the Sunday School, and such a special field of labor as his own class; nor does he again think of either until the following Sunday morning at a quarter before eight o'clock. At that time he is dreamily waking from his fourth morning nap, having spent the time since sunrise in a series of sleepings, wakings, and slow gymnastics on the bed, in the manner of Dr. Watts's sluggard. The "door on its hinges"

shuts with a *bang*, when the thought dawns on the sleepy man's brain that this is the day on which he has to go and teach the Sunday School class. And the time has almost come. He has an hour and a quarter to dress, shave, find and study the lesson, eat breakfast, have family prayers, and run to school. The list of duties is long, for so short a time, so he pauses a while to consider which he will do and which he may leave undone. He concludes toilet and breakfast to be works of necessity. The rest may take their chance.

As he hastily attends to his toilet duties, he remembers how many things he has forgotten during the week which he really had intended to do. He was going to visit those boys in Crook alley, to look for three or four new scholars, to inquire into the meaning of a hard passage in last Sunday's lesson, on which some of the boys had bothered him; and generally to turn over a new leaf. But it was too late now. He will not spoil his breakfast by doing them, or even thinking much about

them. He will let them go this time, and try to do better next week.

Clothes being put on, and hot coffee swallowed, the heedless man is off to the scene of his labors, neglecting much that ought to be done at home. He goes rapidly, but yet is late. He is so often late that when he comes early the boys say there is going to be rain. He comes in while the hymn is being sung, and instead of waiting quietly by the door, he marches in (he has new boots) and takes his place in his class, pleasantly saluting each of the boys, and telling them he is glad to see them. The superintendent ought to abate this nuisance by locking the door.

Our teacher is entirely unprepared in the lesson. He knows where it is, because he remembers where last Sunday's was, by the boys having stumped him on that hard question. So with triumphant air of knowledge, he makes believe that he has studied it. He turns promptly to the right chapter, and asks the boys if they know it. It is hard to cheat

boys, though, and these boys, finding him out, begin to make fun of him to each other. After he has asked all the questions in large print, the boys put several questions to him which he cannot answer. He is forced to the confession that on account of the great press of business on him — indeed this has been the busiest week of his life — he was not able to do his lesson that justice which should have been, done to it. But, as he considers Bible study a great privilege, he will be certain to be well posted on the lesson for next Sunday.

In what he calls the minor matters of his class, this teacher is exceedingly slack. The class-record book he looks on as very unnecessary; and as to putting down the numbers of library books which the boys take home, he thinks it is useless trouble. The question of the wisdom of trying to keep some order in the class does occasionally occur to him, but he cheerfully dismisses it, as beneath the thought of one who has the great interests of gospel teaching to attend to. If he would

attend to the great interests, his heedlessness with the little interests might find some excuse. But he does not attend thoroughly to anything. He has no system, except the system of letting things look after themselves.

With all his heedlessness and inefficiency, he believes, in his simplicity, that he is a first rate teacher. Go to him with any suggestion as to mending his ways, and he says it is a very good one, and that he always does that way himself. He can expound by the half hour how things ought to be done. In this he often talks empty nonsense. But he thinks it is very wise talk, and mistakes the respectful attention of his wearied hearers for conviction of the truth of what he says.

It is an open question in the school whether to ask this teacher to stop teaching, or to try to rectify him. Rectification will involve almost making him over again from the beginning, undoing the work, thoughts, and habits of many years' standing, while turning him out would be short work. They do not want

to hurt his feelings. But one good brother goes kindly to him to tell him of his shortcomings, and to try to set him right. Mr. Heedless listens to him for a moment, then draws himself up with dignity, and tells the brother that he sees he is not appreciated at that school, and that there is a better Sunday School in the next street anxious for his services. He will go there, he believes. Off he goes, in high dudgeon, to the better Sunday School in the next street, where somebody once complimented him to make him stop talking high sounding nonsense, and where he erroneously believes he is wanted.

No Sunday School wants a heedless teacher.

CHAPTER VII.

The Shallow Teacher.

THIS teacher takes his place in his class in a state of great mental poverty. He is troubled to know how he shall spin out his little stock in trade, so as to make of it a sufficient show to persuade his scholars that he is a profound student. He has, in a number of instances, succeeded in passing for quite a good Biblical scholar. The longer he keeps up the appearance, however, the greater is the effort. Sometimes it almost crushes him in the performance of his duties, and makes him very nervous and anxious.

His learning is made up of a heavy dose of Question-book, and a thin skimming of several commentaries which he has at home. This is taken in very hurriedly. He calls it his preparation. It would be wiser to call it a lack

of preparation. It is entirely unavailable for all purposes for which Christian teaching is used, and answers only for the purpose of deceiving himself and trying to deceive others.

As he enters the school, he congratulates himself that the session will not be very long, that the superintendent will consume part of the time in the opening and closing exercises, and (he hopes) a speech; that the librarian must spend some of the time in his performances: and that, after all, if all the teachers were thoroughly examined, some might turn out to be as shallow as himself. When the time for teaching actually commences, he feels as if the time for his public execution has arrived. Nevertheless, he determines to be as brave as he can be, to look wise and not go beyond his depth. With the air (as much as possible) of a theological professor, he begins to make the most of the little stock of undigested material which he has in store. He exposes in rapid succession, as nearly as he can

remember them, the views of each commentator on the passage in hand. Having a little smattering of the Greek language, he indulges the boys with remarks on "the way it is in *the original*," his explorations of "the original" being confined to the words printed in Greek characters in Scott's Commentary. One of the large boys, who studies Greek at school, and is of an inquiring turn of mind, asks him a question designed to bring forth more light on the precise meaning of a Greek word, and finds, to the great discomfort of all concerned, that teacher's vaunted knowledge does not extend so far. Teacher is inwardly angry, but dared not rebuke the lad for doing what it was perfectly natural he should do. He thinks he will get ahead of all such boys by picking up a little Hebrew, which he can certainly quote without fear of molestation. He had better take care. Some studious boy will learn the crooked characters and fly-speck points, even faster than he will, and will give him trouble.

In his manner, this teacher is somewhat pompous and externally wise. He talks so loud as to be heard by all the classes which are neighbors to his own. As he feels his defects, he sees the importance of passing for a profound man in the eyes of his fellow teachers. He uses long words, sometimes rightly, sometimes very much out of place. He generally makes a stir and fuss with his teaching, very much like the commotion made by the last two or three inches of water running out of the bath-tub.

Though the session is not long, he is done before it is time to close the school. He has asked all the questions, and given a little unsatisfactory information about them. What next? He does not know. The boys are glad to hear no more from him, for he has not interested them. He has nothing more to say; no application to make, no religious remarks to offer. He sits and looks at the boys, while the boys gape round the room, or annoy the next classes by talking to each other.

If advice would not be thrown away on this shallow person, he might be told that it is as hard to counterfeit bank-note engraving as to work honestly for bank notes; that the amount of trouble and nervous energy expended on the external show of learning, would be better spent in actual study; that he would do well to explore his Biblical helps, instead of skimming on their surface; and that he may let his little stock of Greek and Hebrew go for the present, instead of making a paltry exhibition of them, which will only disgrace him. But he is not fond of advice. He thinks, in common with most other shallow people, that he knows as much as anybody.

Reader, are you a shallow teacher?

CHAPTER VIII.

The Argumentative Teacher.

IN early life, this teacher was a prominent member of a debating society in a rural neighborhood. He exercised his gifts largely in the discussion of abstruse and incomprehensible subjects, and made a powerful impression on himself as to his abilities in this branch of literary labor. As he advanced in years, he became a debating society himself, habitually presenting and answering arguments, entertaining himself, but making himself very disagreeable to people who have not such an argumentative turn of mind.

He is not an ill-natured man, yet those who meet with him judge that he is, from his fondness for opposing the views of everybody else. He suggests subjects for what he calls conversation. It is soon discovered that

by conversation he means argumentative discussion. He introduces controversy into his conversation when there is no necessity for it. When he takes his stand on an idea, he thinks that everybody else has wrong notions on the subject. This would not be so bad, but he goes further. He puts down every body whose views differs from his own, as his mortal enemy.

It is not to be expected that this teacher will feed his little flock with the pure milk of the Word. His teaching is an exercise in semi-religious polemics. Instead of instructing his scholars, he gets up arguments with them, and calls it Biblical criticism. Instead of making the way of salvation plain to them, he suggests to them the difficulties which cluster about some of the knotty points of Scripture, telling them that if they succeed in clearing away these difficulties, they will be first rate critics. He bothers their minds about whether the Israelites were right or wrong in helping themselves to the portable

property of the Egyptians; about where the materials for the Tabernacle came from; about the size of Solomon's household, and the style of Elijah's chariot of fire. He would have them settle accurately the amount of wine that Timothy was to take with his water, the nature of the evil done to Paul by Alexander the coppersmith, and the exact number of feet and inches of the stature of Zaccheus. All these things may be well to know, and it is right to study them; they are only side dishes to the gospel feast with which our youth must be fed. But our teacher makes them the staple of his instruction, stuffing the boys with an immense amount of controversial head-knowledge, and forgetting much of that which is necessary to salvation. Gospel simplicity is unknown to him. Whatever of doctrine he teaches must be presented subjectively, then objectively, then from some particular standpoint.

At the teacher's meetings, this teacher is a nuisance. The fervent interest which he has

in the school, brings him out on the stormiest evenings. The other teachers wish he would stay at home, but no rain, snow, cold, or other unpleasant state of weather, hinders him. He is not always in time for the religious exercises of the meeting, but is on hand when the business is brought up. He has something to say on every subject that comes before the meeting. And he is apt to say it in such a way as to cause unpleasant fervor. The views and "brief remarks" which he offers, the discussions and ventilations of different opinions to which he gives rise, consume an important part of the time of the meeting. He is possessed of considerable information; sometimes it is right, sometimes wrong. But no matter what the subject under discussion, whether of vital doctrine or of the correctness of his watch, he is always positive that he is right, incontestible evidence to the contrary notwithstanding.

In the varied round of Sunday School duties, this man sometimes finds himself at a

Sunday School convention. He is most at home at the convention where an obtuse committee has selected a dozen topics for discussion, of such a nature in themselves as to call forth expression of great diversity of sentiment, and so bunglingly stated as to befog the minds of the delegates about what they mean. There let our friend have full swing for his oratorical and controversial powers, and the whole convention may fancy itself present at a session of his original rural debating society. It is this kind of man who does mischief at a convention, and brings discredit on the enterprise.

This is not a useful teacher. He is so much a man of argument that he is not a man of prayer. He spends so much time on polemics, that he has none left in which to speak to his boys about the value of their souls. Nor will he be useful until he changes his ideas and his habits. He must stop being a debating society, and remember that he is a teacher of the gospel. Then he may do some good.

CHAPTER IX.

The Inexperienced Teacher.

A YOUNG man or young woman, not very far removed from boyhood or girlhood, fresh from the Bible-class and boarding-school. A young person of excellent intentions, but of such limited experience, and of such slender acquaintance with the things of the world, or of the Sunday School, that the good intentions fail of development into practical usefulness.

The inexperienced teacher goes to his work with very little understanding of its duties or responsibilities. An earnest call has been made for teachers. All who can teach are invited to come and fill up the gaps in the school. Our young friend thinks he can teach. It looks easy. The older teachers seem to get along well, and he does not see

why he should not get along as easily as they. So he offers himself, and his services are thankfully accepted. His mind is filled with the thought of great activity and usefulness. Off he goes to his new labors, feeling that he has already done great things, surmounted obstacles, and accomplished victories. He is like the city-bred merchant who buys a hundred acres in the country, expecting at once to succeed handsomely in farming, because the previous owner of the property always had good crops. As the citizen finds that he has practically to learn much that he never knew before, about seed-time and harvest, shovels and pitchforks, so the teacher soon learns that he is very ignorant about how to do that which is before him. He has even to learn how to use the appliances which are to help him in his work. He is in a novel and embarrassing position. He asks the boys how their old teacher used to teach them. Although they know just how he taught, and would like to be taught again in the same way, they are

unable synoptically to explain how it was, and the teacher fears that they are stupid, because they do not tell him. What is he to do with such a dull set of boys? He has formed no plan for teaching; it never occurred to him. Before long the boys begin to draw mental comparisons between him and their former teacher, whom they loved and esteemed very highly. They conclude that the new teacher is a booby. This diminishes their respect for him, and increases the difficulty which he has in governing them. Symptoms of disorder are visible in the class, and, as soon as the neighboring classes are disturbed, certain old gentlemen and ladies, who have taught in Sunday School since they were of his age, look with reproving countenances at the source of the disorder. Their solemn looks convey the idea that they mean to say that the young man never should have been brought into the school, for he knows nothing about teaching or keeping order. The superintendent fears that he has made an unfortunate error in ac-

cepting his services, and the young teacher himself, finding that teaching is not as easy as it looks to be, and that he has failed in the attempts which he made at the exercise of authority among his youthful charge, heartily wishes himself out of the scrape. He goes home with a heavy heart, and is nervous when he thinks of the prospect before him.

This teacher has some talent for teaching, but his difficulty is that it is yet undeveloped Like a raw recruit who goes into battle, and fails to shoot any of the enemy, because he does not know how to handle his gun rightly, so our raw teacher is ignorant about taking aim so as to send the shafts of gospel truth home to the hearts of his scholars. His abilities must be developed by the kind training of those in the school who are older than he is. A little unkindness, or unnecessary reproof, may snub him, and nip his usefulness in the bud. The stately Bible-class teacher should remember that forty years ago he was just such a young man, just as inefficient, just as

green, just as inexpert in Biblical criticism. The superintendent must bear in mind that it is his duty to take hold of such youthful helpers, and show them how to do their work. If he has not the gift for such instruction, it is a sign that he should vacate the office of superintendent.

Especially in the teachers' meeting this young teacher can pick up useful information.

The teachers' meeting should be held not only once a month, for business or prayer, but every week, for prayerful and diligent study of the lesson. If the most inexperienced will attend such a meeting regularly, and will diligently try to profit by what he hears, he will become better fitted for his duties than if he prepares his lessons in a corner. And if the older teachers will make it their business to help the young ones along, instead of staying away from the study-meeting because their learning is so great that they need no more, they will do much to help on the generation of young teachers who must fill their

places when they die or become superannuated.

God bless our young, raw, inexperienced teacher! Go on, young friend, and take courage. "Let no man despise thy youth." "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

CHAPTER X.

The Dull Teacher.

TEN years ago this person took charge of a Sunday School class, having for his capital a reasonable amount of Scriptural and general knowledge, which he had gained in the ordinary walks of educational experience. Since that time, his perceptive and progressive faculties have been asleep. He has gained nothing; has made no progress; is no better as a teacher than he was the day he first sat with his class.

Not only is he no better than when he began, but he is not so good. As a locomotive left standing, even under cover, for ten years, will not only fail to accomplish the amount of travel expected of such a machine, but will become rusty and incapacitated for work, so the dull teacher is found to have rusted and

got somewhat out of gear, during the time in which he has not been adding to his stock of knowledge. The knowledge itself has become rust-eaten. The well of his learning has been so often and so thoroughly pumped dry, that there is nothing in it.

Hence, he is a dull teacher. Trying to pump up something from where there is nothing, always was dull work. Standing by, and looking or listening, while the operation is being performed, is duller work still. He would raise a crop of very dull boys, only that the superintendent has occasionally changed his scholars.

Dull teacher feels no very lively interest in his class. His interest is not sufficient to stir him to punctuality. He frequently comes in with the air of a laggard, ten minutes after the school has begun. He takes his seat with a yawn of regret, which appears to be partly for coming late, and partly because he has to come at all. Yawning is contagious, so the boys yawn too. Another yawn or two, and

the lesson is commenced. The boys plod through the reading, verse by verse, of the chapter. When they mis-call the hard names, he does not correct them. If a boy misses the right verse, and reads the wrong one, he takes no notice of it. The only irregularity that attracts his attention, is when five boys in succession read the same verse, which they sometimes do for fun. Then his wrath rises at them.

His method of imparting information is to ask all the questions in the question-book. This is done with not quite so much interest as is manifested by the examining physician of a life-insurance company, when he asks you the list of questions in reference to your age, health, and prospects for a long life. The only difference is, that the physician seems to feel some interest, while the dull teacher manifests none. Each question brings an additional feeling of heaviness into the class. The boys see their teacher's countenance as unmoved as if made of putty, and

feel that it makes very little difference how they answer. If they know their lessons well, no objection is made. If they come entirely unprepared, teacher does not seem to be very sorry. There is a total absence of all stimulus to improvement.

Still, this teacher attempts something which looks like trying to interest the boys. After the dull round of questioning is over, there is considerable time left. This he occupies in his way of telling a story. His way is to select from the "children's column" of the dullest religious paper he can find, the very heaviest and longest article. This he reads to the boys. His reading is as dull as he is himself. The boys are not interested. They attend to everything else that is going on in the school. He reads on, whether they will listen or not. That is their own look out, and not his. Presently the superintendent's bell tinkles, while he is in the middle of a sentence. School is to be closed. No matter where he breaks off. He is not particularly

interested in it. The boys not at all. They would just as lief stop there as go on to the end. He rolls the paper up and thrusts it into his pocket, and his teaching exercise is over. He does not consider whether or not he has accomplished anything. The thought of accomplishing anything never occurred to him.

Now, what is the use of having such a prosy plod as this man put to work to teach children the way of life? Do you want to have your boy in his class? No, nor would I put mine under his care. We want the teacher who is wide awake, whose interest prompts him to continual acquisitions of fresh information, that he may impart it to his scholars; whose love for souls is so great that no sacrifice is spared in doing his work; whose devoted energy manifests itself in cheerful endeavors for the good of his class, and of the school; whose eyes sparkle with delight when he sits down to engage in the performance of his Sabbath-day exercises. To such a teacher we gladly and hopefully send our children.

Good-bye, Mr. Dull Teacher. Go away, or turn over a new leaf. We don't want you in our Sunday School.

CHAPTER XI.

The Wearisome Teacher.

IT is tiresome business to be near this man while he is giving instruction to his boys. He is a man of industrious and inexhaustible patience. He thinks that everybody else ought to be as patient as he is. He grieves over the depravity of the present generation, as he notices the general indisposition to give heed to his prolonged remarks. To sit in his class and be regularly taught by him, is even heavier than to be an occasional bystander.

This teacher cannot be accused of slighting his work. His preparation is made at home with great research and ponderous labor. He has all sorts of commentaries and other helps into which he explores deeply. He takes in a large store of knowledge. If he had a mental hydraulic press, by which this could

be condensed, he might become a very interesting and profitable teacher. But he cannot, or does not condense. He must give his hearers his stock of knowledge in undiminished volume.

When he takes his seat in his class, he begins to act the preacher. His boys are his congregation. His chair becomes a pulpit, one of the old fashioned kind, with toad-stool column underneath, and sounding board overhead. His teaching is sermonic discourse. It has heads, divisions, sub-divisions, and so forth. It continues until a stop is put to it by the closing of the school, and would continue longer if time were allowed for it. His arguments are good. His logic unexceptionable. His applications tolerably fair. He suffers nothing to interrupt him, except disorderly conduct on the part of some wearied boy. When this occurs, he digresses, to deliver a lecture of fifteen minutes on the shamefulness of doing what the boy has done. After the first three minutes of this exercise

have passed, the boy forgets what the teacher is talking about. But the teacher, with serious face and monotonous tone of voice, keeps on. He means well. He has no intention of doing otherwise than his duty demands. The effect of his teaching is rather to tire than to instruct; to displease rather than to interest.

It sometimes happens that the long-winded man is not the deep student and careful reader that our friend above mentioned is. He may be an empty headed person. When this is the case, his tediousness is more difficult to be borne with than that of the scholarly teacher. Mr. Empty Head comes with really nothing to say, but with a great store of words to express himself with. He turns on the stream of his volubility, and allows the vapid stuff to have continual flow, until he brings up against something which quenches it, generally the ringing of the bell for the closing of school. He seems to be wonderfully interested in what he says. The difficulty is, that he cannot in-

terest anybody else. He is not disturbed by that, however. He is too obtuse to see that his boys think him a great bore. He says the session is too short. They grieve over its too great length. The surrounding teachers look with astonishment to see how continuously the man talks, all the while saying not much.

When a speech is to be made, and nobody else is on hand to make it, Wearisome is put on the stand. As these occasions seldom occur, he makes the most of them. He talks against time, against patience, and often against common sense. He occupies three-quarters of an hour in saying what in many instances could be condensed into ten minutes, and in many others need not be said at all. It is fatiguing work to listen to his "few remarks."

Public prayer is sometimes led by him. Forgetting the beautiful brevity of the Lord's Prayer, the petition of drowning Peter, and of the thief on the cross, he thinks (if he thinks at all) that he will be heard for his

much speaking, and keeps on for twenty minutes. The prayer gets to be so much like a speech that the hearers forget that it is prayer. They grow very tired of it.

Lest I should fall into the same error with the long-winded man, and prolong this article to too great length, I close with three brief rules for the tediously disposed:

1. BE SHORT.
2. BE POINTED.
3. CONDENSE.

Follow these, and your weary boys will freshen up like corn in a pleasant shower, after a long drought.

CHAPTER XII.

The Unconverted Teacher.

MY FRIEND—I will not write *about* you, but *to* you. Your position is a strange combination of privilege, responsibility and danger. You need a message spoken in your ear. Give prayerful attention.

What are you doing? You are teaching young people the way of everlasting life. You are telling them that there is a heaven, and that there is a hell; that they must spend eternity in the one or the other. You are showing them how to gain heaven, and how to escape hell. Your instructions are based on the Bible, which you thus accept as the inspired revelation of God's will. Whether your teaching is thorough or not, the fact that you teach at all, is evidence that you know of the existence of an omnipotent God,

of his revealed word, of the future reward of the righteous, and punishment of the guilty. You know that only by faith in Jesus Christ you can be saved, for you have often told your scholars so.

Strange inconsistency! You tell them of the way on which you have never set out. You speak to them of heaven and hell, when you seem not to care in which your eternal abiding place shall be. You teach them the Bible, but its promises have never yet been found precious to your soul, and its warnings to flee from the wrath to come, have never had your attention. You tremble, perhaps, as you reflect, (if you ever reflect,) that the God, of whose omnipotence you tell them, is powerful to destroy you in an instant. You reject the only Saviour, the acceptance of whose free mercy you are urging on your children.

What is the effect of this on your scholars? They do not believe what you tell them. They have sense enough to know that there

is something wrong. Perhaps they do not suspect your sincerity, but they cannot understand, why, if you warn them to flee from coming wrath, you should not yourself lay hold on eternal life. If you were skating with them, and should point out to them a certain portion of ice as too weak to bear them, and should then go over the very portion yourself, they would not believe there was danger there. You cannot persuade them that a certain article of food is unwholesome or poisonous, so long as you eat of it. They will be apt to follow you, and to do the things which you do, especially the bad and foolish things. And so long as you pursue the road to hell, it will be difficult for you to make them believe that the road to heaven is better for them to walk in.

Are you not in a strange and contradictory position? It will not mend the matter to say that you are teaching only for form's sake. That would be inexcusable trifling.

You are living as the men lived who work-

ed for Noah. As every stroke of their work on the ark only added to their knowledge of the coming deluge, and of the necessity of speedy repentance, so each lesson you give, adds to your responsibility, your knowledge of the truth, and your sin in rejecting Christ. They did their work well on the vessel which saved Noah's household, and yet were lost. You may be, outwardly, a good teacher, and yet, if you will not accept Christ, you will lose your soul. It must have added to the misery which these men felt, drowning, while Noah floated off in safety, to know that they had worked on the ark which saved him, and yet had no interest in it, or benefit from it. So, if at the last day you stand on the left side of the Judge, your wretchedness will only be the greater, as you remember that you helped to build up Christ's kingdom, having no part or lot in the matter yourself.

But do not be discouraged. Do not, in vain despair, give up your class, and stop your efforts to do good. You may have done some

good already. God may have taken the pointless arrows of truth, which you have sent out in ignorant unbelief, and made them sharp and quick to the conversion of some soul. The lessons you are teaching, will, if you but apply them to yourself, do you some good. Stop and ask yourself, "What am I doing?" Trying to show these children how to be Christians. "Had I not better be a Christian myself?" When you get that far, stop again, and ask God, for Christ's sake, to make you a Christian. Then go to your class, and see with what earnest zeal, with what living energy, you can tell them how to be Christians. "Whereas I was blind, now I see," will be your glad testimony to them, as you point them to the mighty Saviour who can remove the scales of error and ignorance from the eyes of the sightless sinner.

Unconverted teacher! What are you going to do? Do you mean to keep on in your dangerous and deceptive position? I can hardly believe you are a wilful hypocrite. If you

were, you probably would not have begun to teach. But you are thoughtless. You don't care whether you are saved or not. Of course your concern for the salvation of your scholars cannot be very deep. If you have positively resolved that you will always be thoughtless and careless and impenitent, out of the school with you, as soon as possible; for you are increasing your own condemnation, and dragging souls with you down to hell. But if you intend, in God's strength, to live a new life, keep on, and God bless you in the good work, and strengthen you, that you may win many souls to a knowledge of the truth.

Unconverted teacher! You have lived unconverted long enough. Dedicate yourself *now* to God's service. Not merely with a common resolution, made in your own strength, and soon broken in your own weakness; but a covenant, a consecration, a surrender, a giving away of your whole powers, time and talents to God. That only will make you happy and useful. Only with such a conse-

cration can you hope to be saved, and to save others.

"Lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

CHAPTER XIII.

The Inconstant Teacher.

AS a fine-looking carriage-horse, just doctored up to be sold, starts off with great speed, proudly prancing, and with impatient champing of the bit, so this teacher commences his duties with much outward demonstration which appears to promise excellent results. As the gay horse, after he has been driven a few miles, suddenly becomes tired, and shows symptoms of a desire to go no further, so, when the novelty of teaching in Sunday School has worn off, and the fact is realized that there is actually some hard work connected with it, the unstable person's efforts relax. He wants to stop and take breath. The good intentions and resolutions with which he has stimulated himself to action, have ceased their working, and he must stop till he can get up

some more. He is a broken-winded teacher. His intentions in beginning the work were good. He knew that he ought to teach in the Sunday School, and he felt that he could do it. His determination was that no stormy weather should keep him from his work, that he would always be punctual, and that his class duties should be conducted with neatness and regularity. He resolved that he would never go unprepared to his class. To this end he spent a considerable amount of money in buying books and maps to help him in his study of the Scriptures. He turned over several new leaves in the administration of the affairs of the class, each of which he considered to be an improvement on the ways of the previous teacher. He won the love and affection of his scholars; for he gave them plenty of reward tickets, and one evening invited them to his house to tea. He sang with all his might,—

"In all my Lord's appointed ways,
My journey I'll pursue,
Hinder me not, ye much loved saints,
For I must go with you."

The other teachers were pleased with his earnestness. They congratulated him on his success, and he congratulated himself.

But, after the pleasant freshness of the Sunday School has passed, and the congratulatory part of the work is over, it appears to our teacher that teaching is harder work than he at first thought it to be. The labor of preparation is different from the pleasure of looking at new books and arranging them on the shelves. The trouble involved in regular attendance on school is greater than he thought it would be. His scholars do not all at once become Christians. Nor do they spend the time and care on their lessons which he thinks they ought to. Nor do they even give very thoughtful attention to what he tells them. He is discouraged. He comes late. A rainy Sunday keeps him at home. What is the use in his getting his feet wet, just for those dull boys? A friend comes to spend Sunday with him, and he stays at home to entertain him, or goes with him to hear the flash

preacher at the other end of the town. It does not occur to him to provide a substitute for his class, or even to tell the superintendent that he will not be there. The class may look out for itself. How did it get along before he was there! He soon becomes very irregular, and presently stays away altogether. He still says that he loves the Sunday School, and that his interest in it is unabated, but when asked to return to his post, he begins to enumerate some twenty reasons why he cannot, all of which should be honestly condensed into, "I don't want to."

He is one who, having put his hand to the plough, looks back. He is Lot's wife, looking again for the pleasant things of Sodom. The good seed which was sown in his heart sprang up suddenly, "because he had no deepness of earth." The sun scorched it, and, having no root, it withered away. If the superintendent has many such teachers in his school, he has to keep a large reserve corps, an extra set of hands, to supply their

lack of service when they feel more like staying at home than coming and doing their work. Such a teacher is no advantage to the school. He puts his plough in the furrow, and leaves it for somebody to stumble over. He becomes a pillar of salt, not to be used for seasoning, but to be a monument of inconstancy. The fewer such retrospective ploughmen and Lot's wives we have in our Sunday Schools, the more prosperous we shall be.

"Ye did run well; who did hinder you?" Inconstant teacher, you hindered yourself. You "ran uncertainly," and so ran off the track. You fought "as one that beateth the air," and so accomplished no victory. Consider your ways. When you are ready to run with patience, as well as with a little stimulated zeal, the race that is set before you, "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith," and not to the strength of your own resolutions, come back again into the school, and all hands will cheerfully welcome you to your return to duty.

The magnificent carriage-horse may start off finely, and travel gaily for a while; but if his first mile is travelled in three minutes, it is no proof that he will go twenty miles in an hour. For good, hard, steady, reliable work, give us the solid, patient animal who works in the dray, even if he is a little of a plod.

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

CHAPTER XIV.

The Disagreeable Teacher.

THIS teacher has no positive hatred for his scholars, but nevertheless manages to inflict on them a considerable amount of discomfort and worry. He looks on them as members of an evil and perverse generation, and, though the object of his teaching them is to reclaim them from their evil and perversity, he prefers to look on what they are, and what he is sure they will continue to be, rather than on any improvement of condition to which he might lead them. He does not expect that they will ever become good boys, or smart scholars. And if any of them should happen to brighten up and learn something, it might cause him some uneasiness, because it would take away that much

of reason for groaning and being disagreeable.

When he meets his scholars in the class, a large part of the burden of his discourse to them, is of the great interest he feels in them, the trouble to which he has put himself to come and teach them, and the solicitude he feels, that notwithstanding all these, they will turn out to be good-for-nothing boys. But he throws it up to them so often, and so unpleasantly, as to lead the hopeless good-for-nothings to doubt the great interest, and to wish he would spare himself the trouble which he seems to grudge.

The time for teaching is spent partly in actual teaching, but principally in speaking to the boys on the subject of their various errors and short-comings. If this were pleasantly and kindly done, a reasonable amount of it would be wise; for the object of teaching is to correct that which is wrong. But he does it in such a way as to discourage the boys, and to extinguish their ambition to mend

their incorrect ways. Instead of encouraging them, he exhibits their errors in such a way as to make them believe they are so far wrong that there is no use of trying to do right. He tells them that he cannot understand how they ever learned so many bad things and ugly ways.

In teaching, his method is peculiar. It seems to be calculated rather to vex its victims than to impart useful information to young learners. The idea of "speaking the truth in love," he does not understand. He puts the questions to his scholars very much as a smart lawyer questions a witness when he wants to confuse him, and make him contradict his own testimony. There is a tone of sarcasm in each question which foreshadows the blunder which the lad will probably make in answering, and the vindictive benevolence with which the teacher will set him right. He is fond of showing off his great acuteness, and ability to make corrections. The teaching is often interrupted with short digressive

lectures, beginning with "there now, sir," or "you stupid." The boys are so used to these, that they fail to give the attentive regard to them that they might, if the lectures were any novelty. He is roused by their want of attention, to pronounce them rare instances of brainless stupidity. "This is the fifteenth time I have told you of this, sir; what do you expect will become of you if you are so heedless and so wicked?" Boy does not know what will become of him, but expects that it will be something very bad; possibly he will be hung, or his sentence commuted to imprisonment for thirty years. In which latter event, he hopes that the teacher and himself will not be confined in the same cell, lest they should tire of each other's company. The boys do not love their teacher very much. One rude young person goes so far as to call him Old Crusty.

In his intercourse with the other teachers, Mr. Disagreeable is not very pleasant. He does not like their ways, and intimates that he has not much confidence in their ability

to teach or to administer discipline. He finds fault with them, and picks flaws in them in various ways. He complains that he is not popular among them, and wonders what can be the reason.

When he goes home he always has something to say against the superintendent, whose rules he does not like. One day the superintendent locked the door during the opening exercises, to avoid disturbance by late comers. That very day Mr. Disagreeable was behind time. He rattled at the door, then went off and did not show himself for three Sundays.

There is no telling how much abuse the superintendent received at his hands during that time. Finally he swallowed his wrath and returned to his class. He says the superintendent is a tyrant, and ought to be put out. Would be willing to serve as superintendent himself, if the teachers would only elect him. But they will probably not vote for him.

This man needs a little sweetening. Then he may become a good teacher.

CHAPTER XV.

The Uneasy Teacher.

THE teacher who bears this title is related to "The Fidgety Superintendent," whom he likes very much, and in whose ways he follows. He has a large and prominent nervous system, to which he frequently alludes, and which gives him and everybody about him a great deal of trouble. He has no settled rule of order, but does his work according to the notion which happens to possess him. He has a great many notions. Some of them are very strange.

Sometimes he comes to school early. He spends the time previous to the opening exercises in impetuous bother. Instead of calmly preparing for the work which is before him, he scolds one boy, praises another, and engages in conversation with a third. Some-

times he is late. Then, with the air of one whose breakfast has been poorly cooked or imperfectly served, he rushes in during the time of the opening prayer. He is so unmindful of the comfort of his fellow-teachers, that he makes a disturbance as he enters the school-room. It does not occur to him that he could do otherwise. He says he does the best he can in respect to all the branches of his duty. And perhaps he honestly thinks he does. But other people think he could be improved upon.

The commencement of his labors is to put his class in a stir. He begins to do several things at once. Finding the lesson, arranging the library books, inquiring after absent scholars, and saying good morning to those who are present, making marks in the roll-book, and hearing one or two boys recite verses which they have learned, are heaped on each other in promiscuous confusion. The affairs of the day are at once in a tangle. He has so much to do. How will he ever get

through it? He thinks he is a very laborious man. So he is, but he spends more than half his labor for nothing, and so accomplishes much less than he would if he were to exchange his habits of disquietude for coolness and tranquillity.

When he is seated in the class, and has begun his teaching, suddenly the thought occurs to him that he must confer with the superintendent, the librarian, or with some other teacher. The topic on which he seeks to give or receive advice is one of such importance in his mind that it must be attended to immediately. It would have been well had he so ordered his affairs as to avoid fluttering about the room in school time. But he did not think in advance. Off he starts, telling his scholars he will be back in a minute. Knowing he will be gone for sometime, they improve the opportunity thus given them for disorderly entertainment. He finds the official to whom he would talk, engaged in other duties, and interrupts him without even

stopping to ask him if he wants to be interrupted. The errand generally turns out to be a very trifling one. The superintendent sometimes has to give him a hint to go back to his place by announcing from the desk that he wishes the boys in Mr. Uneasy's class would stop making such a noise. Teacher sometimes returns at once to his post of duty, sometimes looks at the class, says he does not think they are making much noise, and goes on talking. If every teacher would thus independently tramp round the room, the effect on the school would be same as would be the effect on the army of the Potomac, if all its officers were to spend their time at the hotels of Washington, instead of on duty.

His habits of thought and study are so restless that he never fixes his mind on one subject long enough to master it. He takes some trouble to prepare himself for his class, but instead of thoroughly learning any one lesson, he skims over a number of things remotely connected with what he is going to teach

about, and so collects a considerable amount of unfinished bits of preparation. Instead of the literary and religious feast which he should spread before his pupils, he gives them, as it were, an under-done lunch, in which there is great variety, but not much that is good or digestible. Of course, they receive but slender nourishment. He jumps at a conclusion, on matters of doctrine or history, instead of calmly making up his mind. If one opinion seems to him to be wrong, he at once precipitates himself into another, without pausing to examine into the merits of either. He is as apt to be wrong as to be right.

So in matters of teaching and discipline. He has his hobby, his mania, his forte. Generally one at a time, and only for a little while. To-day, punctuality is his great idea. To-morrow, it will be loud singing, and he may be ten minutes behind time. Soon he makes a great point of the duty of wiping your feet on the door-mat, as you come into school, and his punctuality and music are

both laid aside. Sometimes he will teach nothing but catechism, sometimes only certain verses of Scripture, on which he trains the boys like so many parrots. But neither one of these continues to be his hobby for any great length of time.

Uneasy teacher wants to change his class. He has had it three months. It is the fifth class he has had in two years. He thinks that he and his boys are not adapted to each other. If he had other boys, he thinks he might do better with them. The boys want another teacher, too. They are a little tired of him, and it is no wonder. Their weariness of him is a matter of encouragement to his successor. The superintendent indulges him as he has indulged him before. Hoping that this will be the last time, he gives him what he asks for. But his course with the new class is the same as before, fluttering, fussiness, restlessness, disquietude, impatience. He needs thorough reform himself. He must be changed, not his class. He wants a new "nervous system."

CHAPTER XVI.

The Amiable Teacher.

SHE goes to her class with a heart full of love for the work that is before her, and of warm interest in each individual scholar whom she is to teach. Her love is contagious. The girls are glad she has come. They consider it a privilege to be allowed to be in her class. They do not loiter outside the door till the singing is done, or make a disturbance during the time of prayer. Her amiability photographs itself in their pleasant faces. No matter how plain her personal appearance may be, the children think she is the prettiest lady they ever knew. And if she has a beautiful face, her sweet temper and lovely disposition make it so much the more handsome. She is the most popular teacher, and her class the most popular class, in the whole school.

In the opening exercises, this lady's class is a refreshing sight. When the Bible is read, each girl has her Bible in her hand, and attentively follows the reading. It is because the teacher sets the example. In time of prayer, they with her assume the customary attitude of devotion. When the hymn is sung, she succeeds in making them join in it, in which Mrs. Sour, whose class is near by, utterly fails. The reason of her success in this is, that she not only tells the children to sing, but encourages them by letting out the full power of her own sweetly tuned voice. She prefers this method to that of Mrs. S., who says, "There, you, you never sing at all; I don't see what has got into you, that you wont sing; don't you like singing?" Of course they don't like her kind, and never will.

The amiable teacher is a jewel in the way of imparting instruction from the Bible. She not only knows her lesson, but makes her scholars know it. The instruction is so

pleasantly given that it is a matter of mutual surprise when the hour of teaching closes.

These girls love the Bible. It is not associated (as in the case of Mrs. Sour's children,) with cross looks, sarcastic remarks, or calling them stupid and idle when they will not learn it. The children are led, not driven. They are coaxed, not punched. They are made to understand that the Bible is indeed an interesting and delightful book, and not a dreary task, to learn which is miserable punishment.

She has a happy knack of correcting what is wrong in her scholars. She does not hit them on the head, nor crack their knuckles with a stick, in order to show them the error of their ways. Nor does she worry them with long-winded sermons when a few kind and pointed words will answer the purpose better. Here is a very dull child whom some injudicious teacher would exasperate by calling a "stupid little thing." True, she cannot give the child brains, but she has a happy

faculty of making the most of what little brains are there. The consequence is that the child is learning something. The girl, who is now number one in the class, used to be rude and impudent. But rudeness and impudence hid themselves before the example of amiability, and the girl is now ambitious to conduct herself in a Christian manner.

Amiable teacher visits her scholars. Her visits are as when bright sunshine lights up the house. Father and mother and girls and boys are all glad when she comes, and sorry when she goes. A word of kind sympathy with the sick child and of good cheer to the anxious mother, a gentle rebuke to the father for not coming to church, a help or two in the hard lesson which the boys are studying, a little prayer in season. Her visit is spent in trying to do them some good, rather than in complimenting and flattering them, and telling them how wise and handsome they all are. If she leaves a tract or a little book, it is not thrust at them with a "there, take that,

you sinner," but it is left with such a charming word of persuasion as to make sure that they will both look into it and read it.

The other teachers hold this excellent woman in very high estimation. Her kind disposition has endeared her to them as well as to her scholars. They want to be as successful as she is. If they follow in her ways, they will be astonished at their success, and at the ease with which it is accomplished. They will see that it is not only the beautiful and delicate lady who can impart instruction with gospel courtesy and Christian grace, but that even the great-fisted, six-feet-high man, with coarse voice and broad shoulders, can, if he will, live a life and do a work, which will be a plain and practical sermon from the text, "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

CHAPTER XVII.

The Regularly Late Teacher.

THIS gentleman may be expected to make his appearance at the door of the Sunday School from five to ten minutes after the exercises have commenced. He bolts in, as if he had come on an important errand which must be attended to in great haste. He bounces into his seat, and salutes his scholars who are present, which adds to the disturbance he has already made. He thinks it is no matter whether he comes late or early. It would put him to some extra trouble to arrive always in season. He thinks that his work does not suffer by his tardiness. He says he does the best he can. If he is rebuked for his bad habit, he says that we are all sinners, and that he will settle this matter with his God. He thinks it is very unreasonable in the super-

intendent to begin the very minute the clock strikes. A few minutes' grace should be allowed for the accommodation of those who prefer to come late. It is still more unreasonable for anybody to find fault with him, or to suggest that he might break himself of this objectionable habit. He cannot see why those who suggest and find fault, should not mind their own business, and let him alone. In addition to being regularly late at school, he and his family are regularly late at church, to the great annoyance of the minister and congregation.

When he is cornered, in debate on the subject, he has an ingenious way of putting the blame on somebody else. Sometimes on the cook; sometimes on the rest of the family, who would stay in bed too long; sometimes on the fire, which would not burn; sometimes on the baby, who cried three-fourths of the night; sometimes on the house-clock, or his own watch, both of which time-pieces ran down, and obstinately refused to wind themselves up.

Sometimes his boots were not blacked in time; sometimes an old friend just returned from China, selected that particular day and hour to call and see him; sometimes he neglected the preparation of his lesson till the time when he should have been putting on his hat and coat. The fact is, that he has no good excuse, and never had; but he persuades himself, and tries to persuade other people, that, by reason of the various things which he calls excuses, it would be impossible for him to be regularly in time at the opening of the school. Some fresh cause of tardiness seems to happen to him every day, each one about as weak as the one which preceded it.

If the real reasons of this man's lateness were to be inscribed upon his back, one morning he would be found labelled, "Didn't think;" another, "Don't care;" another, "Slept too long;" and another, "Let his watch run down." He has not sufficient interest in Sunday School or church to take the little amount of forethought and trouble necessary to insure

his punctuality. If he is a bank cashier or book-keeper, he is at his post in time, every day in the week. Why? He has an idea (a correct one too) that he may be turned out if he is given to tardy habits there. But he gets no pay for coming to Sunday School or church, and he knows that nobody will turn him out.

A railroad train is announced to start at nine o'clock. At two minutes past that hour you arrive at the station, carpet bag in hand. You hear the rumble of car wheels in the distance, and see the clouds of smoke which the departing engine is sending from its chimney. The bystanders laugh at you when you remark to them that your breakfast was not cooked in time, or that you didn't think the thing would go so soon. They offer you no consolation in consideration of your having missed your passage. The Sunday School, which is not conducted with at least the system of a railroad, is not good for much. The superintendent can no more wait, while Mr. Tardy eats his breakfast, than the railroad

conductor can stop for him to pack his trunk. On the strike of the clock (*and the clock must be right*) the exercises begin. The door should be locked during the opening exercises, in order that Mr. Tardy and his relations may have the privilege of standing out in the cold, instead of disturbing those who have taken the pains to come early. This will mend the bad habit as soon as any other course. Try it, superintendent, if you have any regularly tardy ones among your teachers or scholars, and let us hear from you as to your success.

The good superintendent of a good Sunday School has no occasion for the services of a Mr. Tardy, and politely declines them when they are offered. He knows that the man who cannot exercise enough self-denial to come regularly and punctually to school, will never accomplish much in teaching children the way of life. Tardy must think beforehand what he is going to do; must wind his watch regularly, and set it correctly; must give up his

slovenly ways and careless habits, and he may then be a very useful man. Until he reforms he is of very little use, and the little good he does is counterbalanced by the disturbance he makes.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Traditional Teacher.

IN the Sunday School where this man's labors are put forth, things are done somewhat differently from the way in which they were done in the school to which he formerly belonged, and where he was brought up. His attachment for former customs is so great that it seems to be a prominent part of his creed. He is distressed at any introduction of what he calls novelty. He thinks it is wrong. He is as particular about doing his work exactly as he did it twenty-five years ago, as any Chinaman is about wearing his garments after the precise pattern of those of his forefathers. When his course is objected to, he says that he has always got along to his entire satisfaction, in his accustomed ways, and that it is therefore unnecessary to change them. He

declines investigating to see whether or not his work would have been better done, had he been willing to improve by the suggestions and discoveries of other people.

In whatever he does, therefore, he is governed not so much by the excellency of his way or belief, as by the fact that he was taught so to do or believe when he was young. He was taught, indeed, many excellent things; some not so excellent; but he believes that none of them can be improved upon by any modern inventions. His very religion itself is the result of inheritance from his parents and grandparents, rather than of careful investigation and conviction for himself. It is none the less true on that account, but the force of its truth on his mind is not such as to enable him, in every emergency to give a "reason for the hope that is in him."

In boyhood this person received his Sunday School education, sitting on a semi-circular bench. Consequently he is much disturbed

by the action of the furniture committee, who propose to introduce square forms into the new building. He is sure they will never answer the purpose. Years ago the teachers meeting was held on Tuesday evening. Now it is held on Thursday, that evening being more convenient to most of the teachers. Our friend never comes without a sigh at the departure from the good old ways of former years. The librarian of former times had a musical gift, and used to raise the tunes. The present librarian is no musician, but the superintendent happens to be able to fill his place. Mr. Traditional cannot see why that officer should bemean himself by doing what the subordinate officer formerly did. And he is further annoyed by the change in the selections of hymns and tunes. The hymns used to be all long or common metre, with wofully plain tunes to match. These of the present day are made up of one long line and three short ones, followed, perhaps, by three long lines and a short one. The modern

tunes seem to him to be objectionably merry and trifling. (Some of them are, by the way.) The fact that the children unite more vociferously than of old in the use of these hymns and tunes, is to him only an evidence of the shockingly depraved sensationalism of the present generation.

In his teaching, it is evident that his stock of knowledge is exactly what was taught him in his youth by his respected teacher, and by his pastor, the Rev. Dr. Bother. It was all good in its day, but has since failed to keep up with the progress of Biblical criticism. His idea of Noah's ark is that it was like the high-peaked, sharp-nosed imitation of it which are on sale in the toy shops. It never occurred to him to examine the sixth chapter of Genesis, to see if the vessel could possibly have been made of any such shape and proportions. Teaching about the psalms, he calls them *all* the "Psalms of David," forgetting, or never having learned, that some of them were evidently written five

hundred years after David was dead. In illustrating the "eye of the needle" through which the camel with difficulty passed, he makes it the literal eye of the literal needle, generally "a fine cambric needle, boys," instead of the "needle's eye" in the city wall. The boys think that the rich man would indeed have a hard time of it, getting to heaven. When he tells about Paul *at the feet* of Gamaliel, the idea received by the boys is that of a very small and youthful Paul sitting on a little stool before the wise teacher of the law, who sits on a high and stately chair. He omits in illustrating the parable of the Good Samaritan, to say that the oil was poured into the sufferer's wounds, and the wine into his mouth. The boys get the idea that the wine with the oil was poured into the wounds, which would have made the poor fellow additionally uncomfortable.

This teacher would be a very useful man, if he would only build upon his good foundation. The foundation laid in youth and in

by-gone years, is good as far as it goes. But a cellar can never be let for a family tenement, if there is no superstructure to it. It must be built up, story after story, till it becomes a house. Then it will rent. Our Traditional friend must remember that with all the objectionable novelties of late years, there are many good ideas and practices worthy of his attention.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Excellent Teacher.

MANY sheets of paper would be consumed in fully describing the character and habits of this useful Christian. Let it suffice for the present to take a hasty glance at him. It will be a pleasant task.

The place to find him during school hours, is at his post of duty. He loves his work so well that he makes his arrangements beforehand to be regular and punctual. He does not let his watch run down, does not lag in bed two hours later on Sunday morning than on other days, nor does he forget his preparations till so late an hour that he has to run with dangerous speed lest he should be tardy at school.

It is a pleasure to watch him while he is at work. No cross words, no sour looks, no

sarcastic speeches, mar the enjoyment which the scholars feel in receiving instruction from him. The youngsters love to be taught by him. Not because the teaching is all sugar-plums and candy, but that with the sweets of kind manner they take in sound instruction and gospel education. When he asks them questions, it is not to chuckle over their ignorance of the answers, or to prove that they are indolent dunces, but to draw out what knowledge they have, and to pave the way for improvement in that in which they are deficient. "Speaking the truth in love," is his motto. He gives them pure, sound, undiluted gospel, and gives it in such a way as to make them relish it, and hunger and thirst for more.

It need not be supposed that the kindness which this teacher shows to his class, prevents him from enforcing discipline. He knows that one of the kindest acts he can perform for them, is to show them what they do wrong, and how to do it rightly. Mr. Spoon, who

teaches the class near by, does not believe in exercising discipline on children, for fear of hurting their feelings, and making them dislike him. Consequently his class is generally in an uproar. Not so with the class of Mr. Excellent. It is a model of decent behavior; and the boys have more respect and affection for their teacher than Mr. Spoon's boys will ever feel for theirs.

Excellent teacher is a man of enterprise. While he has great respect for our forefathers who compiled and used the "New-England Primer," he does not believe that that good book should be the principal staple of teaching to the youth of the present day. He loves and respects the hymns, question books, reward tickets, and other helps, which were used when he was a small boy; yet, in the present day of progress he would no more confine himself to these, than he would go from Boston to Washington by stage instead of in the rail-road cars. Whatever is offered in the way of improvement, he examines; ac-

cepting it if good, rejecting it if of the style of many of the catch-penny things which designing inventors and publishers palm off on the unsuspecting, as necessary and important aids to their work.

When work is to be done, this teacher is the man to do it. He does not shirk his share of labor, expense, or responsibility. He does not consent to be placed upon a committee merely for the glory of it, with the understanding that the other members shall do the work, or that they shall all leave it undone, and then report "progress," as many committees do. He looks on this as a species of dishonesty and craftiness, which is disgraceful to any professor of religion.

He is courteous in his dealings with his fellow-teachers. He loves them, and makes them love him. More than this, he supports the authorities of the school, and of the church. You never hear him groaning or muttering over some regulation which he does not like, or at some action of the superintendent which he would prefer to have otherwise.

Of his habits of visiting the scholars and their parents, of his methods of dealing with cross and rebellious children, of his studious preparation for his class duties, of his neatness and order in doing his work and in keeping his books, a volume might be written. One other trait in his character need only be mentioned. "Behold he prayeth." His prayerful spirit of devotion is the basis of all his excellence. He prays, as he labors for the conversion of every boy in his class. He is satisfied with nothing less than this. Faithful, earnest, intelligent, arduous in his devotion to his work, he hopes on, labors on, prays on, encouraged now and then by seeing hopeful conversions; discouraged sometimes by their absence; but always trusting in the promise of the Lord of the harvest, to whom he looks for continued and final blessings on all his labors.

Teacher! is the standard high? Climb up to it. Do not pull it down, that your ascent may be easier. The better the reward, the

more worthy of winning. The higher the calling, the more glorious the excellence of attaining it.

SCHOLARS.

CHAPTER XX.

The Mischievous Scholar.

THE object of ordinary teaching is to make some improvement in the condition of those who are taught, and to add to their stock of general information. The object of Sunday School teaching is, in addition to this, to correct all evil ways, and lead the pupil into the path of everlasting life. In order that we may teach wisely, it is necessary that we have a thorough understanding of the material we have to work upon. If the children who come to be taught are perfect in all their ways, they need no teaching, and may be sent home to be good

examples to the neighboring children. If they are deficient, ignorant, or naughty, we must try to give them such instruction and correction as will conquer their faults and overcome their ignorance. But we must not deal with them at random. The physician who blindly administers half a dozen remedies of different kinds, and for different diseases, all the while guessing to find out what is the matter with the patient, is apt to make bungling work of it, and, if the disease is serious, to make a job for the undertaker. The skilful physician finds out, to the best of his ability, what is the matter with the sick man, and then wisely administers the proper remedies.

It is as much the duty of teachers to study the character of their scholars, that they may know how to teach them, and what to teach, as it is the doctor's duty to find out what is the matter with his patient before committing to paper the medico-canine Latin which tells the apothecary what nauseous mixture to bottle up for the sufferer's relief.

Let us, then, with this view — namely, what is the matter with them, and how shall we treat them — summon a few of our scholars to stand in a row for their likenesses. And first, as the lad is a little uneasy and restless, let us dispose of

THE MISCHIEVOUS SCHOLAR.

He is not a positively vicious boy, yet his desire for practical fun develops itself in such a way that those who are annoyed by it naturally think he is very bad. He goes to Sunday School principally for the fun of it. He has no religious understanding, and can not discern things in a religious light. Instruction seems to be wasted on him. Some of the teachers shake their heads when his name is mentioned, and say that he is a bad boy. Others say that possibly something may be made out of the fellow, yet. It is true that his pranks are a great cause of disturbance to the whole school. During prayer time, he appears to be devoutly joining in

the prayer, but is furtively amusing himself by creaking the bench so as to make a noise. The superintendent has offered a reward for the boy who thus annoys the school, but nobody can find out who it is. Sometimes he waits outside during the opening exercises, to make a noise by stamping in just as the lesson commences. He generally comes with entire ignorance of where the lesson is, or what it is about, and pretends to manifest a great desire for information on both these points. The information given him generally appears to be thrown away. He is not fond of study.

He is sharp and quick, and is sure to catch his teacher in a blunder, if teacher makes any. He considers this a great triumph over the teacher, and arranges the time and manner of his triumph so that the rest of the class shall know it. If the teacher comes late, this boy will crow over it for a month, and come late for several Sundays himself, that he may have the enjoyment of pleading his teacher's

example. In singing, he pretends that he does not know the tune, but is trying to learn it, and makes such ludicrous attempts to learn, that the other boys laugh, sometimes causing the singing to break down, which amuses him all the more.

This boy is apt to be a pest outside of the Sunday School. He is not content with hiding the superintendent's roll-book, putting ill-smelling substances in the stove, and such other bits of mischief as are confined to the school, but he aims higher. He gets into church. He ties the bell-rope up so high in the steeple that the sexton cannot get it down till after church time. The other day he watched till the sexton should go into the cellar for coal, and when in, turned the bolt on him, and kept him there till church was out. (The sexton and he are not good friends.) Next Sunday he will probably tie the handle of the organ bellows fast, or perform some practical joke on the organist.

What is to be done with him? "Turn him

out!" says old Mr. Crusty, who forgets that half a century ago he was very much such a boy. "Give him a good talking to," says Mr. Dull, who would probably lecture the boy forty minutes, if he would stand still so long. "Bear with him, and try him a while," says the good superintendent. True, he is a nuisance. The school might seem to be better without him. But the energy and smartness which now show themselves only in these naughty doings, may be the foundation of that which, if properly guided, may be a very useful character. Turn him out, and he is lost. Keep him, show him that you love him, and he will gradually cease his pranks. Tell him distinctly that his mischief is all wrong, but do not crush him. He must be "caught with guile." Have patience with him.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Lazy Scholar.

IN the morning he is a lag-a-bed. At noon he stretches himself. In the evening he gapes and yawns, and says he is tired. Of course he is tired. The hardest work anybody can have, is to have nothing to do. Our young friend's difficulty arises not from having nothing to do, but from being too lazy to do anything.

What kind of a Sunday School boy does he make? Poor enough. He comes sauntering into school at about the same rate of speed as the cows walk, when they are going home to be milked. Only that he is not so punctual as an orderly cow. He says that he and the rest of the family had so much to do this morning, that they could not get through it in time. His teacher asks him if they could not

have accomplished it all in time by getting up earlier. He is startled at the novelty of the idea, and thinks it might be a good thing, but says, like all other lazy people, that he does the best he can. (What a common excuse that is for people who are too lazy or too stubborn to mend their ways!)

It would be unreasonable to expect this young person to learn any lessons. He is so hard at work, doing nothing, that he has no time to study or think. He comes to school entirely unprepared. He tells the teacher that the lesson was *so* hard. Teacher asks him if he looked to see how hard it was, and finds that he did not. The consequence of this habit of neglect of study is, that he knows less about the Bible than a decent Zulu does.

As misery loves company, according to the old proverb, so ignorance and indolence love company. Lazyboy is not well pleased at the smart, bright chap who always knows his lesson, and promptly answers all hard questions. So he tries to corrupt the other boys,

and make them as idle as he is himself. If he can put them up to any mischief, or induce them to lounge outside of the school for half an hour, instead of coming in punctually, he thinks it is so much clear gain; so much saved from the cause of religious education.

He has no habits of attention. He is sometimes civil and quiet while the teacher is talking to him, but he does not heed. The teacher might as well talk to a horse as to this boy. A good dog would remember better than the boy does. Boy does not *think*. Never was in the habit of thinking. Does not want to think. Does not see the use of giving attention. Cares not if he is as ignorant ten years hence as he is to-day. And probably he will know as little then as now.

Is it not a thankless work to teach such a boy? And suppose you have a whole class of them? Better have a class of Newfoundland dogs, or spaniels. The beasts would learn more than the indolent boy.

What is he good for? How shall we make

him learn anything? He wants rousing, pushing, stimulating. But how shall we get into him? He is covered with indolence as with a garment; even as thick a garment as the alligator's hide. But even alligator has some weak spots. So this slow boy may be accessible to some varieties of reward or punishment. Try him first on the reward. Not to reward him for being idle. That would be unprofitable and expensive. Perhaps he may be induced to do something worthy of reward, or at least of commendation. Lead him that far, and it is a great step in his progress. But, if no reward will move him, apply a stimulant of the hornet's nest order to him; give him a good dose of it, and *make* him move on. There is hope for him, if he is properly treated.

CHAPTER XXII.

The Precocious Scholar.

THIS young gentleman is twelve years old. At five, he knew by heart the Sermon on the Mount, the first chapter of John, and the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm; all without missing a word. At seven, he did sums in the rule of three, and several other rules. Now he knows by rote the whole book of Isaiah, nearly all the New Testament, and a great many Psalms; also a great variety of addresses, dialogues, and other semi-religious literature. The other children look upon him as a miracle of wisdom.

He is pale, lantern-jawed, and stoop-shouldered. His eyes have not the cheerful sparkle that a boy's eyes should have. He does not know how to shout, to run, to spin a top, to

swim, or to row a boat. He and his parents regard all such exercises as the portion of rude and naughty boys. In school and in society he conducts himself with great decorum, and is always a perfect gentleman in his manners. He smiles pleasantly, when there is occasion to smile, but you never hear his voice ringing out in a hearty laugh. He sings with gentility, and is master of several very difficult tunes.

On anniversary occasions, (or, as they are generally called now, *exhibitions*,) this boy is exhibited as a premium article of scholarship. He makes a speech, or rather, recites a piece, sometimes a solo, sometimes a dialogue with one or more boys. This exhibition of his mnemonic and oratorical ability, gives great pleasure to his relations, but others think it very ridiculous. His parents think that this display of talent at so early an age, will certainly make him a professor or a judge, when he shall be a man. The superintendent of the Sunday School wishes that the parents would

not crowd the boy forward on public occasions, and is certain that their unwise forcing will be the death of him, long before he is big enough to fill the chair of the thinnest professor.

The other boys have but little respect for our precocious friend. Well do they know that their stock of knowledge is inferior to his; but yet there is something about his manner which repels rather than invites their cordial good feeling. They have various nick-names for him, some of which imply their disregard for his attainments. One of them is "Old Stilts." These annoy him very much, and he lets them see it. Of course, the more they see he is annoyed, the more they try to vex him. The consequence is, that they become to a great extent, enemies, and the line between friendship and enmity seems to be drawn as if between learning and ignorance. He gradually acquires the idea that he is better and wiser than the other boys, and that they are a company of shameless scape-graces.

A word of advice may be in season to this learned boy, his teacher, and the family of which he is a member. The boy is on the road to the sick bed, the insane asylum, or the grave.

Turn over a new leaf. Enough learning has been pumped into the poor creature to last for several years to come. He wants exercise, recreation, and fresh air. He wants less brain work, and more muscle work. Don't take all his books away from him, for that will make him very miserable. But take all except two or three. Take him away from school for a while, and put him on a farm. If he can be made to work for his living, so much the better. Make him rise early in the morning, and retire early in the evening, after a good day's work, and a light supper. Give him a good straw-bed (the best thing a human being can sleep on,) and see that the window is so fixed that plenty of fresh air comes into the room. If there is a pony on the premises, teach him how to ride "bare back." Make

him play as well as work. Make him laugh as well as look solemn. Soon "Old Stilts" will be like other boys; his cadaverous cheeks will fatten and display a little rosy healthfulness. His step will have a boyish vigor in it. He will forget his accomplishment of a few hard tunes, and go singing all round the farm. He will enjoy his life. Then, when you have made him something like a boy should be, start again. Give him a moderate course of books, combined with a moderate course of exercise. But see that the exercise does not consist in solitary hours of swinging dumbbells, or climbing a pole in the dark garret. That is a dismal business. Make it cheerful and social, and it will work the desired end.

What has all this to do with Sunday Schools? Simply this, that if we want to do good to the souls of our children, we must see that the earthly tabernacle in which the soul lives, is in such tenantable order that the soul can thrive in it. If professors, judges, and ministers are to be raised up from our Sunday

Schools, let us take care to raise up not lean-fleshed, cadaverous prodigies of stuffed wisdom, but men with healthy bodies and vigorous minds, who shall be a credit to a nation of freemen, and to the church of Christ.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Rebellious Scholar.

AT the time of the opening of school, he is not in his seat. The teacher experiences a feeling of relief on account of his absence, and goes so far as to hope that he has taken a notion into his head to stay away; for he well knows that if such a notion has taken possession of the boy, nobody can make him come to school. So far as the order and comfort of the school are concerned, it would be a good thing if he would not come at all. But, as Sunday Schools are not only for the orderly and pious, but for the unrighteous and disobedient, we have to put up with him, and throw open the door for him as well as for the good boys whom he disturbs.

The teacher's feeling of relief at his absence is of short duration. During the opening

prayer, a smart banging is heard at the door, which gives notice of the rebellious disciple's wrath at being locked out. The door being opened in due time, in he strides, pounding his heavy boots on the floor in such way as to announce to the whole school that he has come, and is determined to annoy somebody. The superintendent requests him, as he passes in front of the desk, to make less noise. He pauses for a moment, and looks defiantly at the head of the school, making a face at him, as much as to say, "Who are you?" (The superintendent is an amiable man, or he might thrash him.) On he pushes, and presently reaches his seat, into which he descends with the well-adjusted violence of a steam-hammer. He frowns, pouts, and growls at whoever did him the injustice to lock him out. He begins to abuse his teacher for having a special grudge against him, and continues by abusing the other boys for various matters, on which there is a difference of opinion between himself and them. His obstinate and disor-

derly conduct has made him a public character and a public nuisance in the school.

He delights to make a disturbance. Upsetting any of the teacher's plans he considers a feat worthy of any risk in performing. Insulting the superintendent affords him great pleasure. When a speech is made, especially if it is a dull speech, he applauds violently with his boots, sometimes adding a shrill whistle, which he learnt from the boys at the theatre. During the singing, he likes to confuse the musicians by volunteering all sorts of uncouth noises. He is beyond quiet mischief. He would scorn sly pranks on the officers of the school or his fellow-scholars, preferring to set the whole concern at open defiance. He defies them to make him behave himself, to convert him, or even to teach him anything. He is determined to be troublesome, and determined not to learn.

Why then does he go to Sunday School? Can it be a pleasure to him? The good things of the Sunday School are no pleasure

to him. He goes because he can misbehave as much as he wants to. The only thing he enjoys is his victory over law and order.

Would not the school be better without him than with him? Yes, so far as that is concerned, it might be wise to turn him out. But the worse he is, the more he needs to go to school. He needs the teachings of the gospel. If anything ever will subdue his rebellious spirit, it will he the power of the gospel working upon him. It is the interest of the church and the community that he should not grow up as he is. If he is turned out of Sunday School, he will probably make a straight road to the gallows.

What, then, is to be done with him? Go and have a good talk with his parents, says somebody. The difficulty there is that he has got ahead of his parents, and they can do nothing with him. They mourn over his badness, but sadly shake their heads when it is suggested that they should mend him. They let him have his own way when he was

a little boy, (which was exactly what he wanted, and now wants,) and now they cannot make him mind their way. They thought they were *so* kind to him. They so tenderly spared his feelings, instead of giving him a sound switching when he was naughty.

Tame him. That is what must be done with him. "Tame *him?*" says teacher; "why, I would rather try to tame a bison." Then he must have another teacher. He needs a good, kind, firm, able-bodied and able-minded teacher, who will love him, yet hold him with a strong hand. He must be tamed as the great Rarey tames horses. Show him that you love him, and are working for his good, both of body and soul; but let him understand that you have entire control over him, and that you mean to exercise it, if necessary. As you are taming him, put in a little gospel instruction from time to time, increasing in amount as you get him tamer and tamer.

The boy will be an earnest boy, and when he grows up, will be an earnest man. He will

probably be a very bad man, or else a very good man. A very useful man, or a continual nuisance. But it all depends on how he is treated now.

Look well to him, teacher. With prayerful patience, firmness and diligence, he may be made a Christian.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Careless Scholar.

UTTER indifference to everything that is going on, is the most prominent character of the young man who stands before us. He is always satisfied, and offers no special opposition to anything, good or bad. "Don't care," is the rule of his life, so far as his life goes according to rule. But he does not believe in rules and regulations of any kind, thinking them rather a hindrance than a help. Of course he is neither regular nor punctual in his attendance at Sunday School. He does not care whether he is early or late, whether he is present or absent. He considers it no disgrace to be habitually late, and no loss to be absent for several Sundays at a time. As he does not care whether he knows his lessons or is ignorant of what they are about, he can-

not be expected to devote much time to their study. He loses his question-book, Bible, and hymn-book, as he has no regular place to put them in, and thinks it would be too much trouble to provide such a place. He does not care whether the teacher is pleased with him or not, and so does not put himself out of the way to do what teacher requires of him. He does not value the good esteem of the other scholars, even of those who are the most studious and orderly. The prosperity or failure of the school, is a matter which he does not concern himself about, and it never occurs to him that his good or bad conduct may make the school better or worse. The fact that he knows no more about the Bible now than he did five years ago, does not trouble him, for he considers it to be exclusively the duty of the teachers and the minister to understand about that. He does not see why they should bother him with it. His duties to his parents are performed in a negligent way, which seems to indicate that the parents have been some-

what negligent in the use of the rod to make him mind what was told him. Perhaps that is the root of much of the difficulty.

His personal habits are such as to make it hard to get along with him. If he has a watch, he frequently neglects to wind it, and, when he does wind it, sets it by guess. If he would wash his hands, he neglects to scrub the dirt from them. When he puts on his garments he does not give that thoughtful attention to strings, pins and buttons, that a careful and tidy person does. He parts with his pocket money in such a slip-shod manner, that he never has anything to put into the missionary box. When the box goes round, he says he didn't think about it. When he sits down to study his Sunday School lesson, which is very seldom, he groans several times over the task which is before him, then concludes that he will postpone it till Saturday evening, and take some exercise now, which he very much needs. Of course he finds something else to do on Saturday evening, or else he cannot

find his books. His habits on Sunday are the same as other days. In a year he has lost half a dozen hymn books, and question books uncounted. The books which he has on hand are dog-eared, soiled, and broken-backed. He says that it is not much matter how the books look, if one only learns what is inside of them. (N. B. People who are slovenly in keeping their books, seldom know a great deal about what is in them.)

This lad is a very undesirable scholar in every respect. Instruction seems to be thrown away on him. The teacher may instruct, exhort, expound, argue, and lend him good books. He will not listen to what is said to him, and when he takes books, it is only to soil or lose them, or to return them unread. In the latter case he often says they are very interesting. He pretends to listen, and pretends to read, but his mind is off on a butterfly buzz, while his outer man is in a position of attention. Ask him to-day, what you told him yesterday, and he has forgotten. He says

the minister preached an uncommonly fine sermon last Sunday, but ask him what it was about, or where the text was, and you soon discover that he knows nothing about it. Send him on an errand, and before he is out of sight he has forgotten the message you gave him. And the worst of it is, that with all his absent-minded thoughtlessness, he is so pleasant and so polite, that you do not like to box his ears, or treat him exactly as you would treat the violently bad boy. But he is really harder to deal with than the quarrelsome and disorderly.

The sum of his arguments and excuses for his various short-comings, is "*Didn't think.*" He thinks it is enough. Nobody else thinks so, though.

I once heard an aged negro slave pray, after sermon, "Oh, Lord, please to mind and make us remember to try and not forget de word of de gospel what we jist done listened to." If the careless scholar will earnestly pray such a prayer, and follow it up, there is hope for him.

CHAPTER XXV.

The Too Big Scholar.

HE is fast attaining the stature of man. Several preliminary hairs sprout on his upper lip. His voice is no longer the squeak of infancy, or the treble of boyhood, but is changing to a manly bass. He has cast aside his former round jackets, and arrayed himself in a coat with amply flowing skirts and other indications of manhood. His head is made uncomfortable by the presence of a high-crowned hat, and his mind is disturbed by fear of accident to the shining, silky surface of the same. Some of the younger boys have threatened to throw water upon it. As he is passing through that very ticklish period of life in which his full manhood may be questioned, he is very particular about

having it understood that he is no longer a boy, but a *man*.

He makes up his mind that the surest way of proving to the world that he is a man, is to hold no more associations with boys. So he seriously considers whether or not he can afford to go to Sunday School any more. He does not break off at once, for he has a struggle with himself about it. He used to love the school. He commenced in the infant department. The gray-haired mother in Israel, who was in the prime of life when he was her three-year old scholar, often speaks of what a good little boy he used to be. The teachers under whose charge he was, while in the larger school, feel kindly towards him, and hope that he is not going to leave. And he knows that he ought not to finish his religious education now. But the young men with whom he keeps company sneer so much at the school, that they have almost persuaded him never to set foot within its doors again. So he comes sometimes, and stays away some-

times, feeling quite ill at ease about it, devising weak excuses for his absence, and giving every reason but the real one. He still retains a nominal connection with the Bible class, of which he has been a member for a year or two. But he and the Bible class seem to be of little advantage one to the other. He has grown in bodily stature, rather than in Biblical knowledge, during his stay in it.

Is this young man to be saved, or to be thrown overboard? Is he worth keeping, or shall we frown at him, and induce him to prefer staying away from school?

We want him. We cannot afford to lose him. There is work for him to do. "*He* do any work?" says an unbelieving teacher. The idea has obtained currency that the young man is above work. He needs more teaching than he has had, and especially the kind of teaching which will show him how to work. The teacher who will succeed in making him learn anything more than he already knows, will succeed in a very hard task. Such teachers are scarce.

How and where shall we teach him?

How? Gather all such young persons into a class by themselves, and put them under the care of the kindest and most judicious man that can be found. Not a long-winded man, who will weary them with tedious preaching; not a dismal man, who will drive them away with his doleful exhortations; not an austere man, who will shake his head, and make grim faces at them; but a good, warm-hearted Christian, a man of tact and enterprise. One who remembers that he was once a young man, passing through this critical state, will do better than one of the stately sort, who never was young.

WHERE? In a room by themselves. The neatest, prettiest and most commodious room that can be had. If there is not one, build it without a week's delay. You cannot invest its cost in a more paying enterprise. Let it be light and cheerful; clean, comfortable and attractive. A neat book-case, containing a moderate library, is indispensable. Furnish

the walls with good maps and charts, which, if the teacher understands using them, will afford a ceaseless fund of profitable instruction.

In this private room of their own, they can enjoy freedom from what is to them the irksome restraint imposed on little children. They can sing their own hymns, and that as noisily as they please. They can call themselves the men's class, if they like the name. They can be saved from being nuisances to the church people, whom they would otherwise annoy by hanging around the doors, gates, and curb-stones. They can be kept from vicious associates, who would drag them to ruin. And when they graduate from the grown-up class, it will not be to break loose from instruction and religion, and become Sabbath vagabonds, but to re-enter as teachers the same rooms in which they were formerly little boys, and in their turn to engage in the good work of teaching youthful sinners the way of salvation.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Scholar who Does Not Learn.

THE lad is tolerably regular in his attendance at Sunday School, and cannot be complained of for disorderly or rebellious conduct. In many things he is a pattern for the other scholars. He seems to learn. He often knows his lesson, or at any rate has a sort of external acquaintance with it. On special occasions, if a prize is to be struggled for, he struggles, and sometimes wins. If a public examination or exhibition is to be had, he stuffs himself with sufficient knowledge to stand very creditably in the eyes of the spectators. He can commit by rote a great many verses of Scripture, when it is necessary. So he acquires a reputation for scholarly habits, and thorough Biblical education. In connection with this, and on account of it, he as-

sumes a certain degree of superiority over the boys who, not having been specially stuffed, omitted to win prizes, to speak speeches, or to recite, with parrot-headed volubility, prodigious amounts of Scripture verses.

But, with all the show of learning, the young man really learns little or nothing; frequently nothing at all. Six months after he has gained a prize, he has forgotten exactly what the prize was for, even though it was got after much cramming. He cannot recollect what it was that was crammed into him. Though he may learn several thousand verses of the Bible, his shallow memory has not taken hold of a single important truth or doctrine. Though he appears to give respectful and even earnest attention to the preacher, the preaching produces no more effect on him than rain-water does on the feathers of a healthy goose.

Look at him when he becomes a big boy; almost a man. He is going to leave the school; he is too old to be taught any more.

He has been receiving instruction since he was five years old. He ought to know something. Examine him. Ask the difference between the Mosaic dispensation and the Christian. "They didn't teach us that." Ask some of the particulars of Jewish sacrificial rites. He knows no more about them, than he does of the religious ordinances of the Digger Indians, nor does he care for one more than for the other. See what he knows of our Saviour's life and ministry. It is all a blank. Ask him when Israel seceded from Judah, and how many kings each nation had. He never troubled himself about that either; didn't suppose it was important. The names of the Apostles? "I am not good at remembering names." No; he is not good at anything. He has neglected his privileges; has despised his opportunities. He came to the feast when the tables were spread with good things, but left them there and went away hungry and empty; and he will continue in a condition of mental and religious emptiness

all his life, if he does not change his course. Although he has been a regular and well behaved scholar, his disregard of instruction has been as great as that of the boy who spends his Sundays in skating, swimming, or going for chestnuts.

What is the matter with him? Simply one thing. He lacks application. Instead of studiously applying himself to what was before him, with a determination to master it, he has been dreamily napping away the precious hours of instruction, only waking up once in a while to stretch himself and stuff in a little show of learning. He has supposed that the machinery of the Sunday School would somehow or other pound learning into him, in spite of his absent-minded thoughtlessness and wandering inattention. He expected to wake up some day and find himself a well instructed person. If he does not wake up, the probability is, that he will be a dunce all his life.

His condition has all along been one of

passive reception. He has received much. He has given nothing. He has had vast heaps of instruction poured into him. He has never poured any of it out on others. It never occurred to him that he might make use of his learning as he went along. It has gone in at his ears and out at the top of his head. Had it gone out by his mouth, somebody might have been the better for it; some younger brother, or sister, or an ignorant parent, perhaps. But it has all evaporated; it has been wasted, as fine perfumery is wasted when care is not taken to cork the bottle. If the bottle is well corked, and the perfumery let out in appropriate quantities, it performs its pleasant mission. If it is thoughtlessly left open, or spilled on the ground, it fails to accomplish that for which it was made.

All the instruction that can be thrust into a boy will do him no good, except with careful intellectual digestion. As food, swallowed in large chunks and in such quantities as to be impossible to digest, will ruin the physical

constitution, so will undigested learning prove to be only so much trash, clogging the mind, and rendering it unfit for the noble and holy purposes for which the Creator designed it.

"Fools despise wisdom and instruction."

CHAPTER XXVII.

The First-Rate Scholar.

WE all love him. He is popular in the school, and with all who know him. We love him because he not only says, like the heedless child, that he tries to do the best he can, but because he really does try, and tries in such a way as to succeed. He shows that his kind of trying means going ahead, and *doing*.

He comes to school regularly, not looking all the time for weak excuses for staying at home. His headaches and other diseases do not come on, as is the case with some of the other children, just in time to keep him from school. And he so thoughtfully arranges his matters at home, that he is in his seat a few minutes before the time for the opening of school. These few minutes are spent in some

quiet preparation for the duties which are before him, sometimes the choice of a library book, sometimes a little refreshment of memory on the lesson of the day. He takes no part in the exercise which is engaged in and enjoyed by some ill-bred boys, of tossing caps and books at each other, till the teachers come.

There is no mistaking what he has come for. Not to yawn, to idle, to disturb the school, or to chat with his friends. But to learn. He knows no other good reason for coming to Sunday School. While he is in school, he makes the most of his time. He feels that he cannot afford to lose a moment, or an opportunity of picking up the smallest piece of information. He does not look on the work of gaining knowledge as a disagreeable task, nor does he think he is doing a smart thing in cheating the teacher out of a recitation. With attentive ears and open heart, he takes in the good word of instruction, trying to remember all that he is told.

It is, consequently, a pleasure to teach him. Entirely different from the heavy work of teaching the dull, stupid creature whose thoughts are in the streets or fields, while his absent-minded body is pretending to give heed to what is being spoken.

The First-Rate Scholar makes some use of his learning as he goes along. He reflects that both his teacher and himself have spent time and labor on it; the one in preparing and teaching it; the other in receiving and storing it away. So, instead of throwing it away, or bottling it up for old age or posterity, he increases its usefulness by imparting some of it to others. He likes to tell his sisters and brothers what he knows. He has introduced a great deal of Bible knowledge into the family, has taught Johnny Stupid his letters, and is teaching Betsy Dull how to read. He finds that all this helps him, and makes him enjoy better what he learns.

He uses his Bible well. He keeps a little Bible in his pocket, and pulls it out in church

and in Sunday School, when the Bible is read or referred to. Consequently he knows, (as John Lag-a-bed in the next class does *not* know,) exactly where to turn when a chapter and verse are mentioned. He does not look in the New Testament for the Minor Prophets, nor in the Old for the Epistle to the Hebrews. He has not only acquainted himself with the localities of chapters and verses, but the saving truths which these chapters and verses teach, have made a deep impression on his heart.

When he grows up, he will make a good teacher. He is not of the sort of boys who wander away from school as soon as they think they are almost men. He loves the school and its work so well that as soon as he is old enough to teach, he will take hold of the work, and do for other youngsters what has been done for him during his youth.

Oh! for more like him! Teacher, you can have them if you want them. Good teachers will make good scholars. Not that every rebellious, stupid, indifferent child can be at

once turned into a model of diligence in learning, and excellence in deportment; but that patient, kind, judicious, prayerful labor with even the hardest and dullest, will improve them, and lead them on from carelessness and ignorance to something of an approach to what they ought to be.

Teacher! up with the standard of teaching! It is not high enough. Let us not be satisfied with merely going to our classes and sitting there, year after year, accomplishing nothing. Let us not be satisfied with the fact that the children are willing to come and drone through a certain amount of dull exercises, flavored with a few thunder and lightning hymns to relieve the monotony of it. But let us work for a higher degree of excellence in every branch of Sunday School attainment, and above all, labor for nothing short of the conversion to God of every child placed under our care.

SPEAKERS.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Sunday School Speech-Making.

THE business of making speeches to Sunday School children, has risen in magnitude within the last few years, till it is now one of the prominent adjuncts of juvenile religious education. Twenty years ago it was comparatively a rare thing to hear an address in Sunday School. The idea of showing politeness to a visitor by inviting him to inflict a talk on the school, without regard to his ability to interest the children, never then occured to superintendents. Once in a long while, a missionary, just returned from the end of the world, or some other place, would offer

an account of what he had done and seen. Occasionally the agent of some "cause" would have a brief hearing. But the institution of speech-making, as it now exists in our Sunday Schools, was then almost unknown. It has gradually risen, and worked its way up to such a degree of respectability and prominence, that children have learned to look for a speech from somebody, good, bad, or indifferent, as a matter of course; just as butter is expected with bread, or sugar with tea and coffee. It is especially within the last five or six years, that this business has increased and multiplied on our schools.

Making a speech to a company of Sunday School children, is productive of good or evil, according to whether the speech is good or bad. A stirring, earnest speech, on the subject of their lesson, or on some subject connected with it, may wisely be thrown in, at almost any session. A speech which is on no subject at all, or on something which calls the youthful thoughts away from what they

have been studying, is a nuisance which ought to be abated. A wise man may rise at an appropriate time, and offer some remarks which may be productive of good; some stupid or silly orator follows him, and the children forget all that the good man told them. Or, when the children have finished the appointed time for study, and are ready to go home, some tedious speech-maker mounts the platform, and lets his thoughts loose for the space of half an hour. The thought of interesting his hearers, has not occurred to him. All he cares for is that he may have a hearing. All that his wearied hearers care for is that he may get done as soon as possible, and let them go home. Of course such a speech is nothing but a nuisance.

The principal object of speech-making, is supposed to be to do the children some good, and so to glorify God. But the hearers of one hundred Sunday School speeches, might well wonder if ninety of them were delivered with any object in view; or, if the speakers

had any object, what it was. One speaker may utter a delightful string of talk, made up of stories and illustrations. It interests the children, and, at first thought, would seem to be a useful address; but when you try to digest it, the stories seem to be without point, and the illustrations not brought in for the sake of illustrating anything in particular. Another speaker spends his time in saying things to make the children laugh. He succeeds in that, for children are easily amused, and will sometimes laugh if the speaker only makes a funny face at them. It would not be a great calamity if some able-bodied Christian should take hold of the man who speaks only for the sake of buffoonery, and violently put him out. It would, at least, save a repetition of the foolishness, by the same man, on the same set of children.

Verily our poor children are imposed upon with a great variety of this kind of entertainment. For every really excellent speech that is made, it is safe to say there are ten which

fail to accomplish any good. The amount of profitable instruction conveyed in the majority even of delightful speeches, is exceedingly slender. It is astonishing to see how much chaff we give the little people, in order that they may have a grain or two of wheat. We torture them by making them listen to all sorts of people who have not the gift of instructing or entertaining them. The long-winded man, whose stream of volubility flows like so much carburetted hydrogen; the anecdote man, with his hungry and pointless stories; the illustrative man, who uses a great many illustrations to illustrate nothing; the man of one pet idea, who continuously ventilates that idea alike before old age and youth; the man who has only one speech, which he uses on all occasions; the dull man, who puts us to sleep; the stupid man, to whose discourse we cannot by any possibility give attention; the disagreeable man, to whom we do not want to attend; the tiresome man, to whom we listen only in the hope that he

will soon be done; the gloomy man, who renders religion as terrible as possible to the children; all these men find their way into our Sunday Schools, with a degree of enterprise and pertinacity which would be commendable if their labors were well and wisely put forth. It requires great firmness in the superintendent to avoid having all these people inflict themselves on the school, and somebody's feelings are hurt when he neglects or refuses to invite one who is known to be an unprofitable orator, who has come expecting to have his say.

Let us have a speech-meeting. In the chapters which follow, we will listen to some of the Sabbath School orators, who endeavor to communicate their ideas to the youth of our land.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The Pompous Speaker.

WITH self-satisfied strut, graceful flourish of pocket handkerchief, and loud blast from his nostrils upon the same, this gentleman takes his position upon the platform. It is Sabbath afternoon. A monthly appointment for laying aside the regular lesson of the day, and hearing speeches about missionary matters. The gentleman has come for the purpose of being one of the speakers. He looks round with patronizing air on the company whom he is to address, clears his throat, says "h'm," several times, and proceeds:

"My dear young friends: Let me observe, as a preliminary, that I must have perfect silence while I address you. You must bestow on me your undivided attention, and not be

guilty of disorderly conduct or confusion. If you interrupt me while I am addressing you, or signify by your inattentive deportment that you do not appreciate my remarks, I shall be obliged, though reluctantly, to bring my address to a conclusion."

He has by this time succeeded in getting their eyes and mouths pretty well open, from curiosity as to what is coming next. He continues:

"My dear children: I am very glad to see you all here this afternoon. I have from my earliest childhood experienced a deep solicitude for the welfare of the young and rising generation. The sight of a little child, awakens in my heart a warm interest for the whole family of infantile humanity. I see them with the world before them; with its hopes and fears, its dangers and its troubles, all unknown to them. I gaze upon their future, but O, what a gaze! My youthful hearers, the Sunday School is infused with a spirit of profound conviction in certain fun-

damental truths. The Sunday School looks to the indoctrination of the youthful heart in all the divine attributes. It contemplates the entire sanctification of every child of Adam"—

Here the superintendent ought to step up to the man and tell him that the children do not understand a word of what he is telling them; but he is a little afraid of hurting the stately person's feelings, and so suffers him to plunge on. He proceeds, and after talking a great deal about himself, a little about the Sunday School, Adam's fall, and several other things, presently gets into the thick of his speech. He is more pompous than at first. His flourish of speech and flourish of pocket handkerchief, are both on the increase. He uses words of great length, and very hard to be understood. The most of his hearers do not understand the speech at all. And it would be no loss, except the loss of time consumed in uttering it, if nobody understood it. It is inflated fustian. It is ornamental dullness. It is heavy frothiness. It is not on

any subject in particular. The great man was announced to speak on something connected with the object for which the meeting was held; but he cannot lower himself to that. He understands that several other persons are to speak, and he will let them attend to that part.

At last, long after the proper time, he brings his remarks to their promised close. Those of his hearers who are still awake, have been looking forward to this moment with pleasurable expectation. The sleepers care not how long he keeps on. He has settled them. He wipes his massive brow, parades down from the platform, takes his seat on an honorable chair, and looks round on the exhausted victims of his address, as much as to say, "Wasn't that a magnificent speech?"

Truly magnificent. "The pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh." Very fine stuff to blow the trumpet with, but very poor fare for hungry and starving young souls.

There are some men who do this pompous sort of talking for the sake of making a display, but there are others who do it because they do not know better. They have heard a great orator or two, and think they ought to speak as the great orator speaks. Mr. Stuff, when addressing a Sunday School, thinks he is Daniel Webster addressing the Senate, and puts on airs accordingly. He comes as near his model as a poodle dog comes to his when he attempts to growl like a lion.

If the pompous man ever does any good with his gift of speaking, it will be after he shall have laid aside all the feathers, gold lace and brass buttons of his style. He must speak with more simplicity, and must be sure that what he utters is sound sense, instead of a long string of empty nothings, covered up with great swelling words of bombastic pedantry.

CHAPTER XXX.

The Long-Winded Speaker.

THIS man's discourse is something like the movements of a very slow steamboat. The starting of the boat gives the passengers some intimation that it will eventually come to its journey's end. But there is no telling how much time may be wearily consumed on the passage. The hearers of the tiresome orator believe that the end of his speech will positively come at some time, even though it be after a nap, or that unsatisfactory mixture of sleeping and waking which every hearer of heavy discourses fully understands. The steamboat passengers have an advantage over the hearers of the weary address; they can talk, eat, or read books, to while away the tedium of the slowly passing time. The hearers must either listen or sleep, for po-

liteness forbids other ways of passing the time.

As the very slow steamboat makes a slow business of getting started, so does the wearisome speaker. It is not rapid work for him to get up steam. The fire under his boiler is not made in time, or the wood is green, or there is not enough of it, or it is not judiciously arranged in the furnace. It sputters and cracks, and halts and heaves. His engine starts with a confusing jerk. He mumbles his words and munches his sentences. He does not get well oiled until the full head of steam is on, and then the oil and steam seem to keep together so closely that the hearers can scarcely discern the one from the other.

Two ministers were going together to a preaching place in the country. As they rode along, A said to B, "I suppose you don't preach very long; we think about half an hour long enough." Said B, "Half an hour! why, it takes me that long to get started."

Then, said A, "If it takes you that long, you had better begin *now*, and you will be in good speaking order when we get there." There is a moral in this for the lengthy speaker. Get up steam before you begin to speak, and so save much of the time of your hearers. We have no more right to take their time in "getting underway," than we have to finish dressing ourselves in the presence of the guests whom we have invited to take tea with us.

The speaker is in motion. Then what? Now the difficulty is to stop him. It seems as if the fountain of his speech were inexhaustible. He has opened its flood-gates — who shall close them? He plods on with great industry, rolling out great lengths of good and harmless talk, seeming to think that his hearers ought to put up with its insufferable lengthiness because it is pious truth. If any were to tell him that they do not like the excellent stuff which he is giving them, he would tell them of their natural depravity of heart.

If objection is made to the length of his continuance, he ascribes it to an unholy longing to be away from the sanctuary and to spend the time in indolence at home. The drowsiness of his audience does not annoy him.

This man may be tolerated once in a long while, because he means well, and what he says is not hurtful; but when Mr. Empty rises to make a long speech, it is insufferable. His countenance says, "Now, here I am; may never have a chance to speak here again, and you may never get another chance to hear me; so I will keep on awhile." The countenances of the hearers say, "Do wish that man had stayed away." Nobody cries, "Go on! go on!" as he brings his sayings to a close. There is a general feeling of relief when he stops, coupled with the hope that his voice may never again be heard till he has something to say.

It is impossible to say exactly what should be the outside length of an address to Sunday School children, just as it is to prescribe a

limit to a sermon for adults. We could listen to Tyng, Gough, Spurgeon, and many others of less fame, for an hour and a half, while the stupid imitator of Tyng, Gough or Spurgeon, would put us to sleep, or disgust us, in ten minutes. As a general thing, however, that which takes over three-quarters of an hour to deliver to grown people, or over half an hour to children, is not remembered. It may be quoted as "very fine," or "really splendid," or "the best I ever heard," but the effect of it is lost. Twenty minutes would be a better general length than thirty. A speaker of rare ability, or a very ridiculous one, may succeed in interesting them for thirty minutes.

Two remedies may be prescribed. One to be applied by the speaker, the other by the Sunday School authorities.

The speaker. Condense. Get some good phonographer to attend on your next speech, and take down what you say. It will cost you five dollars, which will be well spent, for your own good, and the good of the commu-

nity. When the phonographer hands you your speech, written out, you may be astonished to find six or eight repetitions of what need have been said but once; also, several things which you will stoutly insist you did not say at all. Then strike out all the repetitions, and all the diffuse stuff which you need not have uttered, boil the remainder down, and try the new production when you next appear in public.

The authorities. Never invite a man to speak if you know him to be a long-winded speaker. You have no right to trespass on the endurance of the young people by inflicting such an entertainment on them. No matter who or what he is, judge, doctor, elder, distinguished foreigner, or brave general, if he makes a long, tedious speech, he will do as much harm as good. Provide sound, wise, godly men to address your children, but remember that they must be spoken to with earnestness, vigor, and brevity.

CHAPTER XXXI.

At the Convention.

IT is supposed by some persons, that the post of chairman at a Sunday School convention is one of unadulterated honor, compliment and enjoyment. Quite the contrary. A good chairman is entitled to the life-long gratitude of every member of the convention, not only for what he does, but for what he suffers. He must listen to all that is spoken. Others may yawn and slumber, but the chairman must keep awake. Others may attend or not, as they choose, may talk to each other, or to the ladies, or may read books, or newspapers, but the chairman must give ear to every speech, however dreary, and must make bold to stop the same when it exceeds the appointed limits. All sorts of speakers rise before him in turn, (and sometimes out of

their turn,) crying out, "Mister Chairman!" His official title falls so often on his ears, that he congratulates himself that it is not to cleave to him for life, as do titles to ex-governors, ex-professors and ex-military men.

First rises the clamorous speaker. He must and will be heard, and that without waiting. His utterances are very important, (in his own estimation), and therefore he is often on the floor. If he over-runs his time, and the chairman causes him to sit down, he says it is all the same, and he will go on when the next subject of debate is before the house. It is a remarkable feature of his discourse that it will answer for whatever is being discussed, it being about as pertinent to one part as another. Another feature is, that it will bear thus being cut into lengths, like so much stove-pipe, without injury.

The faint-voiced man would be heard. That is, if anybody could hear him. If he is in a position where the chairman's eye happens to light on him, he succeeds in obtaining the

floor; otherwise he has to wait till others who are more noisy, have got through. He proceeds in a whisper or a squeak, till somebody on the other side of the house complains that the speech is not heard. Then he raises his voice for a moment or two, as much as to say, "Can't you hear *that?*" and relapses into his inaudible mutter. What he says may be very excellent, but it fails to instruct, inform, or entertain those whose ears it does not reach. Another variety of faint-voicedness, is when a man consumes two minutes of a five-minute speech in getting up his voice. It is to the hearers something like beginning a book in the middle. And yet another variety is the utterance of one word out of every six in a low tone. This is generally done for the sake of solemnity, or to make an impression. The speaker who does it should have blackboard and chalk, to write for his hearers the words to which he thus does injustice.

Then we hear from the statistical man. He commences with the original observation that

figures will not lie, and forthwith brings in a bundle of arithmetic large enough for a day's study in a respectable grammar school. With this he can prove anything, especially that the speaker on the opposite side is wrong. He is apt to mention that 659,687 pages of religious matter have been distributed, which have been read by 6,789,568 men, women, and children; showing that each page has been read by about 10⅓ persons. In addition to this, he mentions a great many other numerical matters, the aggregate effect of which is to confuse the hearers. A man who would furnish much of statistics, should furnish the congregation with slates and pencils. Better still to have them printed on slips of paper. Always be sure they are reliable.

The flowery speaker ventilates his perfumed utterances. But he is in difficulty where the allotted time for each speech is only five minutes. He has hardly time to begin to get his flowers cut, and tie up his nosegay. And

in the hurry it sometimes happens that he ties up the roses with the thorns sticking out too prominently. Flowery speech may do when a man has the pulpit to himself for an hour and three-quarters, but please to let us have only a little of it when the speech must be short.

Sometime, we hear from an apologetic individual, who asks to be excused for rising at all, and says that his only reason is that he knows nothing whatever, and has come for information. His infirmity, however, is, that after he has made this confession, he commences to instruct the assembled congregation in something which he does know, or thinks he knows, until "Mr. Chairman" calls him to order for exceeding his time.

The very heavy man succeeds in obtaining the floor. He has been struggling for some time, but others got ahead of him, as in the case of the cripple at the pool of Bethesda. He commences by saying, "M-i-s-t-e-r C-h-a-r-m-a-n! Human nature will always be human

nature, the world over." At the utterance of this startling truth, profound silence falls like a damp sheet over the whole assembly. They wait with breathless anxiety during the pause which comes between that and the next sentence. When the next sentence comes, it is found to contain nothing very important, and the same proves true of the sentences which succeed it. Nobody disputes what he says.

These are not all the speakers, but they are the most frequently on the floor. We may learn a lesson or two from them. The man who is most often on the floor does not succeed in speaking at all. He only gets as far as "Mr. Chairman," when he discovers that somebody else is before him, and subsides. It is impossible to tell what the convention lose by his failure to catch the chairman's eye.

Speakers, listen to a hint or two. If you like them, follow them.

Be sure, before you open your mouth, that you have something to say.

Be certain that you know what is before

the house before you speak on it. It will tend to make your remarks more to the point.

Don't be flowery. The shorter your words and sentences the better.

Condense. Many fifteen minute speeches would be better if boiled down to five.

Stop as soon as you are done.

Leave your arithmetic at home, especially if the speeches are to be short. If you want to give your hearers figures, give only grand totals. They will forget everything else numerical.

Let your voice be clear and loud. It is useless to say anything unless you say it so that people can hear you. You would complain if your newspaper were a great sheet of blurred ink marks, instead of clear typography. If the message of the types must be made plain to the eye, so must the message of the voice fall plainly on the ear.

We hear too much talking in the pews, while speakers are speaking. It is so in all religious deliberative bodies. There is one

way to stop it—only one. Let every speaker so thoroughly interest his hearers that nobody will want to talk.

CHAPTER XXXII.

The Empty Man.

SOME empty things are empty because they have been exhausted of that which they formerly contained. This is not the case with the speaker to whom we now listen. His infirmity is that he was not filled. Consequently he has nothing to say.

It would be well for himself and for his hearers, if he could convince himself, before starting, of his empty condition. But he rises with the air of one who has important truths to communicate. Even if he has an inward conviction that he has not much to say, he thinks the emergency may bring forth something. He has heard about how some great men find words and thoughts coming to them in the pulpit and upon the platform, and he does not know but that a deluge of speech

matter may flow in upon him after he gets in motion. He is introduced to those who are to be his hearers. He looks wise at them. They look at him as if they expect something very fine. But he is empty as a tin rattle. True, the tin rattle has a few solid substances within it, which can be made to jingle against its sides, and thus produce an entertaining sound for very young persons. So our empty friend may have an idea or two, or some fragmentary remnants of an idea, which will jingle a little when violently agitated. But the music of the rattle is monotonous, and soon becomes tiresome. So with the speech. It is very hard work to listen to it; all the harder if we sympathise with the suffering speaker in his laborious efforts to pump up something from where there is nothing.

For the opening sentences of his speech, Mr. Empty selects some wise saws, so old that all their teeth are worn off, or else some allusion to his own emotions on being asked to address such an assembly as that which is

before him. If it is an ordinary Sunday School address, and the day is fair, he opens by saying, "My dear children, I am glad to see you here this bright and beautiful afternoon." Then a pause and a clearing of the throat, waiting for something else to come. When the something does come, it is apt to be a slight paraphrase of the sentence already uttered, or an improvement on it; for instance, "I am *very* glad *indeed*, my dear young friends, to behold your pleasant faces here on this sunshiny day." The pleasurable thought which lies at the bottom of this may be ventilated seven or eight times in the course of the speech. If the occasion is a great one — an anniversary or a pic-nic, prominent allusion is made to "this interesting occasion," to the pleasure which it gives the angels in heaven to behold it, and to the Sunday finery with which the children are adorned. If it is at a Sunday School convention, where five-minute speeches are being delivered, these trite remarks consume the whole of the speaker's

time, and he costs the convention exactly five minutes of its time, whenever he rises; giving nothing in exchange for it.

At an anniversary or other meeting where this gentleman officiates, he asks, as a particular favor, that he may be the last speaker. This he does in the hope that he may gather a few ideas from the speakers who precede him. He makes the most of his opportunities here, and sometimes succeeds in appropriating some ideas, but without such digestion as to make them his own. When he brings them out, it is as when a turkey would steal peacock's feathers for purposes of personal adornment; all who see their rich plumage know that they did not grow upon the turkey. He says, "as the previous speaker has just eloquently remarked" — and then he proceeds with a mangled hash of what he thought the speaker said, with variations. If the youthful hearers are asked what he said, they are apt to give such an account as did a little girl who had been listening to one of these empty

men. "Why, ma, he talked, and he talked, and he told us he was glad to see us; and then he talked; *but he didn't say nothing.*"

A man commenced speaking quite eloquently at a meeting where the speeches were to be but five minutes long, but after he had spoken about two minutes, he consumed the remaining three in telling how sorry he was that the time was so short; he would like to have more time. By general consent, his time was extended, as we all supposed he had something to say; which being done, he paused, scratched his ear, and said, "well, really, Mr. Chairman, I don't know that I have anything more to say." The irrepressible smile which followed, interfered sadly with the devotional purposes for which the meeting was held. The man was, oratorically viewed, a tin rattle. One jingle finished him.

The Empty Speaker generally talks a great while; always as long as he is allowed to. He keeps on in the hope that he will succeed in saying something, a hope which is shared

by his hearers, but which is most generally disappointed. That which he says will not warrant the labor and expense of phonographing or printing.

Emptiness arises from want of preparation. It may seem to some people absurd to talk of *preparing* to address children. It is a great deal more absurd to address them without preparation. Consider what you have to say. If you have nothing to say, keep your mouth carefully closed. If on consideration, you find that you have somewhat to say, out with it, weighing every word, and every thought, dressing it in its most pleasing garb, and being very particular to stop the moment you get done.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The Dull Speaker.

IT is not polite to withdraw from a public assembly while a gentleman is speaking. That is the reason why people stay to listen to the dull man. They would rather go home. As they feel that they must stay, some of them take advantage of the opportunity which is offered for slumber.

The Dull Speaker is among orators what the hippopotamus is among the beasts of the field. He is ponderous, slow, uncouth, and somewhat majestic. He puts forth his views in the stately but clumsy manner in which the great animal puts out his feet when he walks. And he as completely crushes out all interest from the minds of his weary hearers, as the hippopotamus crushes the weeds and grass wherever he sets his great flat feet. When

he commences his speech he looks as if to say, "here is wisdom;" and although the appearance of wisdom is carried along the whole course of it, the wisdom itself is so far down in the depths of speechly profundity, that it is impossible for ordinary people to fish it up, or else it is so completely enwrapped in fog, that it cannot be seen. But he has the name of being exceedingly wise.

There is little dispute about what he says. His manner throws his matter so much in the shade, that but few of his hearers concern themselves about whether it is wise or unwise. Frequently he utters sound sense, but in such a way as to render the youth whom he addresses, insensible to any good effect it might otherwise produce on them. His wisdom would be in order for delivery to a historical or statistical society, or for printing on those pages of a benevolent society's report which are never read. But no Sunday School wants to be wearied by its insufferable dullness. The only comments we hear about it, when it

is over, are those which touch on its tiresomeness, its heaviness, or the celebrity and general ability of the good and great man who has uttered it. Nobody remembers any particular point in it, if indeed it had any point. Sometimes the speaker does get off a worn-out joke, which is remembered for its clumsiness, its failure to produce the effect which a well executed joke is known to produce, and its being entirely out of place in every respect.

If the Dull Speaker, and his brother, the Long-winded Speaker, should both speak on the same occasion, it is entirely too much for any audience. If a collection is to follow the efforts of either, or both of them, the particular branch of benevolence which the collection is intended to refresh, is likely to go very hungry. All the hearers yawn when Mr. Dull begins. The children have got into the habit of yawning at the mere mention of his name.

Dull is behind the age in most things. If

he speaks at a missionary meeting, he tells things which were known in 1834, rather than matters of more recent intelligence. He sometimes spreads himself on how one Robert Raikes went into a certain Sunday School enterprise, which was the beginning of all present Sunday School enterprises. In national matters, he has got as far as to where the rebels fired on Fort Sumter, and may be expected by next anniversary season to have become acquainted with the facts of the first battle of Bull Run.

Talk to this man about *interesting* the children. Tell him that he does not do it, and that he ought to try. He will put on a look of profound wisdom, and gravely shake his head, while he tells you of the stuff and flummery with which many vain men seek to interest children. These men, he says, arouse a certain degree of ephemeral excitement; how much better to give them something good and solid. These men but tickle the youthful ears, while his wise sayings go all the way to

the heart. Perhaps he thinks they do, but if he would examine the children at the close of a dull discourse, he would find that not even their ears were touched.

Mr. Dull! Mr. Dull! wake up! You are not interesting the children, or anybody else. Nobody wants to listen to you. You probably do harm every time you open your mouth to speak. You could do good if you would turn over a new leaf. Remember that you have no more right to serve up even good truth in your dull way, than your cook has to bring your food to the table prepared in such a way that you cannot possibly eat it. Wake up, sir! When you speak, remember that you have a message for your hearers. Up to your duty of delivering it, in a straight-forward, manly way! Think well and study well before-hand what you are to say. Stand erect, throw back your shoulders, and throw open your mouth, and let the speech roll out clearly and plainly, so that it will be heard. Begin without apology or introduction. Be-

gin without telling who you are, or the circumstances of merely personal interest which have called you out. Speak fast enough to keep your hearers from going to sleep. Look them in the eyes so as to make each one say when he goes home, "Mother, that man was looking right at me." Above all, feel that you must try to do them some good, and trying this, throw your whole soul into the speech. Then nobody will say you are a Dull Speaker any more.

Not worth the trouble of all this? Can't do it? Then, sir, quit your public performances altogether. Sit down in the far corner of yonder pew, and go to sleep, and give place to somebody who can keep everybody but yourself awake. There is no use in trying to wake you up.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

The Talking Superintendent.

EVERY good teacher in the Sunday School over which this gentleman presides, wishes that a stopper could be applied to his fluency. The indifferent teachers hold him in admiration, for he exercises his gifts so much as to save them the trouble of filling up the time with teaching, and so to avoid disclosure of the fact that they are unprepared on the lesson.

His ways about the opening exercises are not like the ways of other superintendents. Some men can give out a hymn without offering remarks on it, but our friend cannot. He sees in each verse that is to be sung, some important truth, which he fears will not be observed by the children unless he calls their attention to it. So he delivers an extempore

address of several minutes on the first verse. to begin with. The important things in the following verses then crowd upon him so thickly, that by the time he is done giving them the attention they deserve, several minutes more have passed. He is startled for a moment when he looks at the clock, but thinks he will make it all square by singing only a part of the hymn. He gives out, "Sing, if you please, two stanzas, beginning at the fourth." He congratulates himself so much on the saving of time thus effected, that before engaging in prayer, he addresses the school on the subject of prayer; an excellent subject, and one which should be frequently before them, but not especially in order just now. The prayer being duly arrived at, and finished, a chapter in the Bible is to be read. The superintendent now becomes a speaking commentary, partly studied, partly extemporized, principally the latter. Time is spent here which ought to be spent by the teachers in giving prepared instruction, and a slender

amount of good is accomplished by the expositions, which he gives, which are too often like the "variations" which young ladies play on the piano—somewhat pleasing to the ear, but generally only dilutions of the march, quickstep or popular air which is thus "varied." For instance, if he is reading the eleventh chapter of Joshua, he would offer the remark on the eighteenth verse that the kings against whom Joshua was fighting were so many, and their opposition so great, that he spent a long time in the war before he could finish it; the remark being about three times as long as the verse, and throwing no light whatever on it. When the chapter is finished, the way is clear for exhortation on whatever subject is uppermost in his mind. The regular duties of the school ought to go on, but he cannot bear the thought of neglecting so good an opportunity for a speech. Sometimes his speech is on the lesson, sometimes on punctuality, sometimes on the management of the library, sometimes on making a noise

in school; but more frequently on matters and things in general.

And now, his making of speeches being suspended for a while, he makes the cheering announcement to the teachers that it is time to go on with the lessons. This announcement comes like a call to dinner, when the dinner has been standing on the table and getting cold for half an hour. Nobody can go to work on the lesson with the appetite that would have helped them had the speeches been left out. The lesson drags. Teachers and scholars are alike wearied. The younger children make a noise. Superintendent jingles his bell, gives notice that they will please to stop their noise immediately, and accompanies the notice with a speech of six minutes on the wickedness of making a noise in Sunday School. Several of the children pause in their noise-making till the speech is over.

The lesson is finished, being hurried through in much less than its proper time. Mr. Speechy now offers some remarks in expla-

nation of it, which, he says, have occurred to him while the school has been engaged on it. These last remarks are extemporized, and somewhat diffuse. Nobody learns much from them. Then, with a brief harangue on things in general, he dismisses the school.

On a speech occasion, such as a misssionary day or anniversary, this officer is a great bore to the hearers. He talks so much at other times, that nobody cares about listening to him now. But he allows no such trifling consideration as this to interfere with the exercise of his gifts and his rights. If he does not positively make a speech, he does a great deal of negative speaking, such as introducing the speakers, which ought to be the work of a moment, but which he spins out by telling where each speaker comes from, and all he knows about him. This, by the way, is very disagreeable to most speakers. He also fills in the chinks of the time by praising each speech, as the speaker sits down. This also is disagreeable, both to speaker and hearers.

If this Sunday School orator could bottle up his fluency, so as to keep it from flowing out when it is not wanted, it would be a great gain to his school and to himself. He needs a time-table, and should run his exercises by it, precisely as punctual railroad conductors run their trains. Let him allow a certain number of minutes for each part of the exercises; if he must make a speech or speeches, let just so many minutes be allowed, and let the speech come in it its proper place and time. Let it be a good speech, well conceived and thought out, and carefully and simply delivered, even if it is but three minutes long. Three minutes of such speaking will do more good than a whole session spent in garrulous palaver.

CHAPTER XXXV.

The Stuffed Children.

THE practice of stuffing small children with speeches for platform delivery, is so fashionable that it seems little better than useless to say anything against it. There is not much more chance of obtaining a hearing from those who think well of the custom, than there is of being respectfully listened to by a young mother, when you tell her that she is killing her baby by exposing its neck and arms uncovered; or by a young lady, when you warn her of the mischiefs of tight-lacing. Young mother insists that her baby's arms are covered enough; that they do not need any covering at all; and that you know nothing whatever about the baby. Young lady declares that her lungs are not crowded by the foolish machinery with which she girdles

them, and that it is nobody's business but her own, if she does choose to kill herself in this way, rather than to die a natural death. So the promoters of juvenile speaking maintain that it is excellent training for the children who speak; that it will make statesmen and orators of the boys — (the corresponding argument for girls must be, that it will give them sufficient command of language to enable them to scold handsomely in the event of becoming maternal heads of families) — that it will benefit the school religiously and pecuniarily, especially the latter; and that it is in every respect a very fine thing.

Nevertheless, whether people will listen or not, let me say a word about it.

It cannot be denied that great numbers of dimes and such things, are taken at the door of every Sunday School or church thrown open for one of these exhibitions of stuffed youngsters. Neither is it denied that the young persons so stuffed and exhibited do acquire a certain amount of brazen-facedness,

which, if cultivated, will fit them for active duties in public speaking, scolding, or any other branch of exhortation. But the money so raised, burns holes in the prosperity of the school, and the oratoric gifts thus acquired by the children, are of very questionable advantage.

An anniversary is announced under the objectionable name of "Exhibition," thus putting our children in the same category with the "What-is-it," the Thumb family, the learned seal, and the calf with two heads. And the name of *exhibition* is just the name for it. The children whom we love, are thrust forward for show, exactly as are the celebrities just mentioned. Their performance is sometimes very good, sometimes exceedingly poor, sometimes of a negative order, half-way between good and bad, puzzling the disinterested bystander as to the verdict he is expected to render concerning it. Strange speeches are spoken, and odd poems recited, by children who know no more of the mean-

ing of what they are saying, than does the green parrot in the tin cage, of what he screeches. Some selections are made from the Bible, in which case the words of Scripture are sometimes beautifully rendered, sometimes mangled, or carelessly hurried over, with as little reverence as would be observed in reciting the multiplication table. Other selections are made from the reading books in use at day-school, or from some of the "dog-a-log" books published for the purpose. "My name is Norval on the Grampian hills," "You'd scarce expect one of my age," "My voice is still for war," and such stirring bits of eloquence, are shown up side by side with "A dialogue by twelve boys and two grown persons, representing Joseph's dream;" "A dialogue by two boys, on the use of Tobacco;" and "How doth the little busy bee, by a little girl three years old last Wednesday." The printed programmes, describing these entertainments, are often very funny things, and worthy of preservation in scrap books or

other safe places. The style of the oratory, too, is queer. "Norval on the Grampian hills," aged fourteen years, looks sternly at his hearers, raises his right arm as the handle of a pump is raised, and proceeds. The boy whose "voice is still for war," shows that his utterances come from his heart, by placing his hand frequently over that organ, extending his fingers and thumb very much as a daddy-long-legs extends his legs in crawling. One of the Tobacco dialogue boys goes heart and fists into the subject, while the other one, (the boy who has the worst of it,) has the same style of animation as that which is shown by the painted mandarins in the tea-shop windows. The three-year old "Busy Bee," squeaks out what she has to say about that industrious insect, in the very best way she knows how. Her gestures are like those of a jointed doll. Poor little creature! She should have been put to bed two hours ago, instead of being trotted out this way at night, to be made a show of.

I recently paid ten cents for admission to one of these infant prodigy shows, the printed programme of which announced forty pieces to be spoken or performed — just four for a cent. The performers and orators were from two years and a half old, all the way to big boys and girls, the girls being dressed in a profusion of finery. The thing was held in a church. The platform was cleared of the pulpit, so that the oratoric juveniles might have space in which to spread themselves. The pastor announced the items of performance, in their turn. All went on according to programme, till about nine o'clock, when he announced, "the next item on the bill is, *Address by an infant of three years old.*" He then benevolently looked down from the platform to assist the infant when it should be pushed up by its parents, who were near by, in charge of the little creature. But no infant was thrust forward. After a few moments of delay and buzz, the pastor announced, "I regret to say, that the infant who was to have

addressed us, *has gone to sleep!*" Poor little, over-stimulated, exhausted child! She had taught her foolish parents and friends, that they should not make such stupid demands on three-year-old humanity. Her stuffing and cramming all went for nothing; the ambition of the parents was disappointed, as it ought to have been. The audience laughed heartily. The next youngster was stood up, and the moral menagerie-show went on.

A view of the poor creatures behind the curtain, may be profitable.

Deciding which children shall speak is a difficult and dangerous enterprise. Who shall decide? Whoever does, is sure to get somebody's ill-will, for not deciding that somebody's children shall speak, instead of the children of somebody else. The committee who have this business in hand, almost always get into trouble. But this is comparatively a small matter, for they are grown people, and can make the best of their way out of it.

There are two hundred and fifty children,

let us say, in the school. About thirty speeches are wanted. That will be an abundance. Two hundred and twenty young persons must be speechless. What are the qualifications for those who are to speak? Age, stature, parentage, ability to gesticulate, moral or intellectual excellence, or punctual attendance at school for a term of months? From the shocking speaking which some of the young orators do, one would suspect one of these roads to oratoric fame, as quickly as another. The fact is, there is a great deal of wire-pulling about it, just as there is in political life, about the nomination of candidates. (It is a common fallacy to suppose that all the candidates nominated and elected in our free country, are those whom the people really want.) Mrs. Dull wants her Johnny to make a speech, or recite a poem. The committee know that John will make slow business of it; he hasn't the right kind of brains. But Mrs. D. gave fifty dollars to the church last year, and if her Johnny is rejected, she may

withdraw her interest in it. Besides, she offers to stuff and train him, which takes a very great burden off of somebody. John is accepted, trained, and exhibited, but makes such a poor fist at learning "Excelsior," that were it not for the attentions of the boy who sits near at hand with his book, acting as prompter, he would have to leave the platform in disgrace. Sampson Spry is disposed to take part in the exercises, and is supposed to have some oratoric ability, but his speech runs into very lively gesticulations, like the toy jackanapes, which jumps by pulling a string, and Sampie is not understood. The committee prevail on the parents of Georgiannette Slim to let her perform as an infant prodigy, but Georgiannette eats green pears a few days before the "exhibition" comes off, and is laid on the shelf till it is over. The friends and adherents of the two hundred and twenty young persons who make no speeches, are divided in feeling; some being angry at the committee for not bringing their children for-

ward; while others congratulate themselves that *their* children were not made fools of, as were most of the children who spoke.

Then, after the speaking is done, the vain children are elated by the compliments heaped upon them, and even the sensible ones are tickled by the same. No matter how badly a child performs, some people will praise it, sometimes for expediency, to keep in favor with the parents, sometimes for the sake of not discouraging the little thing. If these compliments induce a repetition of the declamation, their effect is bad. Anyhow, dosing a child with compliments is a dangerous kindness.

What is the effect on the school? Tremendous. Did not the newspaper reporter go to the show? Did he not describe it in such glowing colors as to break every school in town which does not have such shows? Did he not praise the immense trouble, and the forgetfulness of expense with which the committee had got up the entertainment? Did

he not speak of the polish and refinement of Johnny Dull, of the earnestness and activity of young Mr. Spry, and of the delicate tones of Sally Simper's voice, of whose speech he could not hear one word? Did he not commend the singing, the ability of the superintendent, the devotion of the teachers, the eloquence of the pastor, (whom he never heard,) the beauty of the church, the density of the crowd, and all other things that ought to be commended? Oh, yes — it is a very prosperous school, a notorious school, and all because it had an "exhibition" of its children, who were taken in charge not to be shown off in this style, not to be trifled with, but to be taught the way of everlasting life.

Stuffing children for anniversary speeches, may be a good way to draw a crowd; to fill an exhausted treasury; to give children a taste for stuff and nonsense instead of for the gospel; to gain the praise of the world; but it is not the way to make children wise unto eternal life. The business is growing more

popular every day. Many well-meaning Christians have suffered themselves to be taken in by its popularity. Serious work of the Sunday School is in many instances neglected for it. If it is not checked, it will become an evil even of more fearful magnitude than it is now. Better let the children sit as hearers of speeches; if they want to let their voices be heard, teach them to sing in the most glorious style possible. Teach them, too, real hymns; not the trash which is fit only to be fiddled and danced to, which too often finds its way into our Sunday Schools. Provide for speakers, wise, able, interesting Christian men, who will instruct as well as entertain; throw open your doors, and invite your friends to come to your anniversary. Don't charge them, any more than you would for coming to a sermon or a prayer-meeting. They have a right to be there. Raise money in some other way, to pay the expenses of the school. Your school, and all concerned with it, will prosper in this way, better than by turning religious education into an intellectual menagerie.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

The Peripatetic Bore.

HE is an uneasy genius, who cannot find rest for the sole of his foot in any particular branch of Sunday School effort. He used to teach a class; but a peculiar kind of headache, which attacked and vanquished him every Sunday, placed him on the exempt list, after a brief and irregular term of service. He was put in charge of the library; but his aching head could not stand the labor. They made him superintendent; but at the next election it was considered advisable to drop him, and substitute a man of more steadfastness and ability. So, on the principle that an Ex-President of the United States cannot consent to serve as police magistrate or town clerk, the uneasy person has ever since been out of office. But he feels a warm interest in

the Sunday School work, and that feeling of interest needs public ventilation. How shall it be ventilated?

There is no such effectual way of putting himself and his Sunday School interest before the public, as to travel round from school to school, paying visits, and making addresses to those who will listen to them. He performs a vast amount of this self-imposed missionary labor, and often to the regret of the schools which suffer it to be inflicted on them. His first visit is an occasion of interest; but after he has been along three or four times, the remark is made, "Here comes that same man again," or "What does he come so often for?" or "We have heard all he has to say." He does not let on, if he hears these remarks, but keeps on with his visits, and makes a speech wherever he is invited. The obliging superintendent of the school which he most frequents, has resolved not to ask him to speak again; but his good nature gets the better of his judgment, and the bore is again

and again permitted to entertain himself by his well-meaning harangue.

To listen to his own account of the labors he has performed, the good he has done, the sacrifices he has made, and the perspiration and fatigue he has suffered, you would suppose that he had refreshed all the Sunday Schools within several miles of where he lives, and has saved the most of them from almost hopeless decay. You would suppose that the boys and girls in these schools are as clamorous for his coming as they would be for a magic lantern show, or the exhibition of a menagerie with several monkeys in it. From his version of the politeness with which the superintendents receive him, and the pressing urgency with which they invite him to speak, you would not imagine how tired they are of him, and how they do invite him to speak only because they fear his feelings will be hurt if they let him sit speechless. When you hear him tell of the breathless attention with which both adults and children listened to

his "few remarks," suppress your recollection of the yawns which overcame you, as you heard him deliver, at your school, the same speech which you had heard him deliver three previous times elsewhere. And do not spoil the "original anecdote" which he has spun out to twenty-two Sunday Schools, by referring to the religious newspaper from whose columns he scissored it.

It is not necessary, for the sake of politeness, to ask everybody who visits your Sunday School to "offer a few remarks." Some superintendents have a habit of doing it, just as they would ask a man to take a seat, or to let them take his hat and umbrella. Few things are likely to injure a Sunday School more certainly than this species of vagabond oratory. It distracts the attention of the children from their lessons; it disarranges the order of the exercises; it frequently reduces the spirituality of the school; it is altogether a nuisance which ought not to be tolerated.

If the afflicted superintendent of a suffer-

ing Sunday School wants to get rid of these troublesome visitors, there are two ways in which he can do it.

First—Don't ask anybody to speak for the sake of politeness, unless you are sure he will make a good speech. Do not allow even a good speech, unless you can arrange it for an appropriate moment.

Second—When you see Mr. Peripatetic Bore coming in, rush up to him, grasp him by the hand, and tell him you are *so* glad to see him, for you want him to teach that class of small boys whose teacher is absent and has provided no substitute. Now you have him. He don't like work. He says he is not prepared on the lesson. In vain you compliment him by assuring him of your belief that he is always prepared on any portion of Scripture. He finds that you prefer that he shall not make a speech. He pulls out his watch and extemporizes an engagement which he must positively fulfil, in fifteen minutes, at a school in the next street. He really cannot

stay. Try this on him two or three times, and he will weary you with his speeches no more.

An uneasy person looks over my shoulder and asks, "Why do you write that stuff? Why not write something spiritual, to convert souls?" To whom I make answer, that if we want our Sunday Schools spiritualized; if we want to lead souls to Christ; the surest way of attaining our object, is by confining our schools to the plain and earnest teaching of gospel truth, and to that end ridding them of all such speech-making humbugs as the Peripatetic Bore.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

The Apologetic Speaker.

THIS orator begins by saying that he positively cannot speak, owing to a very bad cold in his head, which he caught a few days ago by imprudently leaving off one thickness of his under garments. Or, he is a sufferer from the aching nerves of a partially decayed tooth, which he has allowed to remain in his lower jaw longer than it ought to, by reason of not having had time to go to the dentist's for the purpose of having it rooted out. Or, he has not fully recovered from the bruise on his knee, which he received when that joint came violently in contact with the brick pavement one night last week, some careless or designing person having placed melon rind in a spot on which he could not avoid treading. Or, the illness of his wife's cousin (on the

mother's side) has so engrossed his attention since the fourteenth of last month, that he cannot collect his thoughts. Or, he fears (after promising to speak) that he is not the best man whom the committee could have selected for this interesting occasion, and as he sees around him those who are more eloquent than he, he trusts that his well known inability to interest an audience, will suffice for a reason why he should give place to some of the learned and gifted gentlemen who are present. Or, the pressure of business during the past few days has been such as never, in all his business experience, (and here he stops to hint at what a tremendous experience he has had), crowded on him before. It has completely overwhelmed him. Or—he is totally unprepared.

The audience sympathizes with the afflicted person, and unanimously conclude that it is unreasonable to expect a speech from a man laboring under any or all of the above mentioned disabilities. They wonder that his

family could have consented to his leaving home under the circumstances; and still greater is their surprise to see that the committee do not, on hearing his apologetic statements, at once procure a comfortable hack, and hurry him to a place of repose and safety.

But he wants no hack. Instead of sitting down when he is done explaining that he cannot speak, and why he cannot, he pushes on! The sympathy which his hearers at first felt, subsides on seeing that he does actually get along. The catarrhal affection in his head gives him less trouble than he had anticipated. The pangs of the aching ivory are lulled. Ointment seems to have been suddenly and mysteriously applied to the battered knee. The wife's cousin can take care of herself till the speech is over. His stammering tongue moves with ease and volubility which could not have been expected of it. For one who was so entirely without preparation, he does manage to fill up his

allotted time, and generally somewhat more; for when a man begins with an apology, if he consumes half his time in uttering it, he counts the beginning of his speech at about where the apology ended, and so keeps on.

Generally he is as good as his word, and the audience soon find him out, and wish they had encouraged him to sit down, when he declared his inability to speak. His talk is apt to be a continuous string of nothings, amounting in their total to exceedingly little. It did certainly need some apology, if indeed it ought to have been spoken at all. It would have been better to omit it altogether. His hearers grow weary, and, while they wish him no particular harm, hope that some of his infirmites will interfere with his appearance in public, should a future invitation be extended to him.

Sometimes it is the case, however, that a speaker who begins with an apology makes a really excellent speech. This, which is a rare occurrence, is only an evidence that good

men sometimes do foolish things. No apology ever helps a speech. No speech is as good with an apology at its beginning, as it is if the speaker plunges at once into what he has to say, and says it earnestly and clearly. The only warrantable apology is in the case of the speaker of feeble voice, who consumes the first five minutes of his speech in building the fire under his boiler to get up sufficient steam to enable his voice to be heard. If we must have an apology, let us have it then, for nobody will lose anything by not hearing it.

The *unprepared* apologist is the most objectionable. If he is really unprepared, as he says, he has no business to make a speech. If he is prepared, he is guilty of doing something naughty, in saying that he is not. In either case, he is the man who speaks longer than the others. There is no necessity for lifting the curtain and letting the congregation into the secrets of how you get up your speech. When you invite guests to dinner, you do not take them into the kitchen to

show them how the cookery was done. And if you should serve up the food raw, it would be the last thing of which you would boast, or even make mention. In the event of an emergency, calling forth a purely extemporized speech, there is no use in telling your hearers about it, for you may be assured that some of them will never find it out, and those who do, can do so without being publicly informed of it.

At a rural anniversary, a speaker rose, on being introduced to the assembly, and with serious face said, "My friends, I regret to say that I feel *sick at my stomach*, and I fear that I shall not be able to address you on this occasion." He went right on, however, the congregation looking for active developments of the disease. The over-fed organ discontinued its rebellion against the rest of the man's system, and the speech lasted three-quarters of an hour. If he felt unable to speak, he should have remained quiet; if able, there was no reason why he should offend the good

taste of his hearers by saying exactly what was the matter with him.

So much for apologies. They are, at best, useless; at worst, hypocrisy. Away with them.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The Untimely Speaker.

SOME people seem to have been born at the wrong time. Many an enthusiastic inventor has struggled out a life-time of poverty and disappointment, because he was born a generation or so before the public were ready to take hold of his ideas. There are slow persons who are evidently a generation behind the times. Others have entered the world from ten to fifteen minutes too late, as may be seen by their coming into church or Sunday School, regularly that much after the exercises have commenced.

It is uncertain whether the present speaker was born too late or too early. He is an unseasonable creature. His "few remarks" seem always to be launched just at the time when they are most inappropriate. He has not the

gift of saying the right thing at the right time. It might be an advantage to his hearers if he would keep his thoughts entirely to himself, and a select circle of his intimate friends and admirers. But he will let the world have the benefit of them, whether it wants to hear or not. He generally has a hobby. Sometimes it is a pet interpretation of a passage of Scripture, on which he thinks commentators and others have blundered. Sometimes it is the use of tobacco. Sometimes it is parental mismanagement. Sometimes the "inevitable negro." And sometimes it is almost nothing at all.

A meeting for prayer is held during the sessions of a religious assembly; let us say, for instance, a Sunday School convention. The ordinary opening exercises have been disposed of. All are in the spirit of prayer, and expecting a profitable season. The chairman announces that prayers or brief exhortations are in order. Up jumps Mr. Untimely. He proceeds with the information that he has

three sons, two nephews, and a cousin, in the army; states the regiments to which they belong, the names of the colonels, and the dates of their departure for the seat of war; then tells that certain of them have unfortunately been wounded, and gives a brief account of the nature of their wounds and the battles in which they were received. This consuming nearly all of his share of time, he hastily winds up by telling what a good thing it is to be a prayerful soldier, or to have a Bible in your pocket in case you are hit by a minie ball. He adds a sort of postscript to his remarks, to say that he has at home a minie ball which went half way through his cousin's Bible, and which he will be happy to show to any of the brethren who will call at his residence, number fifteen Jeremiah street. The chairman would stop him, only that he has an idea that each sentence of the inappropriate part, is the last, and that he is rapidly arriving at the practical portion of his exhortation. If this speaker rises during the

business sessions of the convention, he is sure to speak on the wrong resolution, or to say some unwise thing if he happens to hit the right one. The chairman kindly undertakes to put him right, but he plods on, remarking that if that officer will pay attention, he will find that he will presently come to the point. The point is so pointless, when it is arrived at, that nobody sees it.

We go to a children's meeting. Untimely has consented to be one of the speakers. The house is full, principally of children, but with a sprinkling of grown people. The other speakers have addressed the children. Mr. Untimely thinks it would be a shame to let all these fathers, mothers, aunts, and uncles go without a speech specially for them, and so addresses all his remarks to adults, forgetting the presence of the very little people whom he was invited to address. The remarks may be excellent, but they are thrown away. The little folks take vengeance on him, some by going to sleep, others by mak-

ing a disturbance, for no children need be expected to behave themselves in a public meeting, unless they are interested in what is going on.

Another untimely man volunteers a speech at the close of a meeting where four or five speakers have already been heard. He thinks he is full of something to say. He boils over. He gushes up to the chairman, and says he *must* say a word in conclusion. Chairman uncorks him, and lets him proceed. But his bottle contains only a few bubbles of enthusiastic froth, with some stupid common-place underneath it. The bottle has such a long and narrow neck that the contents, though not good for much, consume some time in getting out. The only way to quench him, is to sing some well known hymn, in which all can join.

One or two "untimely men" can easily spoil a prayer-meeting, a children's meeting, or, in fact, a meeting of any kind. They soon become known, in the places which they fre-

quent, and can be avoided. A good chairman soon learns how to look in another part of the house, so as not to see them when they bounce up, crying, "Mr. Charman! *Mr. Charman!* just one word on this subject, if you please, sir."

The Untimely Speaker is not a hopeless nuisance. He can, in some instances, be reformed, especially if he is not too old, or too much set in his ways. His chief mistakes arise from the feeling that he must make a speech, coupled with partial or total absence of somewhat to say. For want of preparation, he stumbles into nonsense. Or from want of appreciation of time, place, and circumstances, he wanders into something useless, or calculated to hurt somebody's feelings. If some kind and judicious friend will tell him of his mistakes, and show him what is right, he may so far reform as to make a very useful and acceptable speaker. If he refuses advice, and says he knows so much that he cannot be improved on, drop him.

CHAPTER XXXIX

The Ridiculous Speaker.

THE last words of the ponderous address of that able man, the Rev. Dr. Plod, have just fallen upon the wearied ears of the audience. The audience are glad, for Dr. Plod has been speaking for forty minutes. He has been into the depths of metaphysical theology, and has rolled out his weighty sayings with logical accuracy, and even with elegance of diction. But it was not possible for his youthful hearers to understand one word of it.

Mr. Ridiculous has been announced as the next speaker. The children know him, and are looking for some lively refreshment from him, which they feel that they deserve, after listening to the stately utterances of Dr. Plod. He knows, too, that if that distinguished person were to continue his address much longer,

the hearers, great and small, might be snoring. They need waking up. And he will wake them up. He reasons within himself, "Old Plod couldn't come it over these folks; but see me fetch them." And he proceeds to "fetch them."

The first thing he does is to make a comical face at the children. The children at once set him down as a superior man, for Dr. P.'s countenance was as unmoved as a mile-stone, during his speech. Now he is going to interest them. They begin to love him, and wish he were going to talk all the time. He makes another funny face, which makes the youthful congregation laugh. These pleasant smirks are instead of the ordinary "introduction" with which sermons are begun.

The "introduction" being over, he plunges into the heads of his subject — (if his subject had any heads, or if he had any subject, it would be a good thing) — or, at any rate, he plunges into something. It is a string of funny nothings, without head, middle, or tail.

One queer story succeeds another, interspersed with pleasant grimaces, which come as naturally and as frequently as do the oaths with which profane men spice their conversation. It is extremely delightful to the children, but miserably unprofitable. It is like the elegant froth puddings which adorn hotel dinner tables; fine to look at, but poor stuff to feed upon; nearly all froth, and almost no pudding. As it would not require a careful calculation to ascertain exactly how long it would take a man to starve on such puddings, so we might easily calculate how soon a Sunday School would run down if statedly fed on such foolish nothings as the present orator utters.

Both Mr. Ridiculous and Dr. Plod are in error, although their errors are widely different in their character. Plod is as grave as a sexton; Ridiculous cannot help playing the buffoon. Plod never smiles, while Ridiculous thinks that the chief excellence of speaking is to keep the children on a broad grin all the

time. The Doctor thinks it undignified to be constantly using illustrations, and so entirely avoids them. The funny man uses great loads of them, but they are only jokes, and are not used to illustrate anything in particular. Plod disapproves of froth pudding, but does not hesitate to offer his young friends stale sawdust pie. The one they cannot possibly swallow or digest; the other they gulp down in large spoonfuls, but the more they get of it, the poorer and thinner they become.

It is very easy to make children laugh, especially very young children. But making them laugh should not be the chief object of the man who addresses them in Sunday School. If mirth is all that is desired, it would be well to omit the speech altogether, and only *do* funny things. Let a funny person go from bench to bench in a Sunday School, and tickle the children's noses with a straw, or pleasantly punch them under the ribs with a stick, and he will have the school in a burst of cheerful merriment sooner than by delivering the very

funniest address he knows. Perhaps somebody says this would be a ridiculous proceeding. Not much more ridiculous than some of the buffoon speeches which are sometimes made.

It is not denied that the Ridiculous Speaker succeeds in securing the attention of the children. Children will give heed to whatever is amusing. Let a man come along with a barrel organ, and the most entertaining speaker cannot hold their attention. Let some lively boy report that there is a monkey in attendance on that instrument of music, and it takes more than ordinary discipline to restrain them from crowding the doors and windows to witness the grotesque performances of the merry-making little beast.

How far, then, is it right to be *funny* in speaking to children? Very little, indeed, if we want to do them good. Some cheerful brother is disturbed at this, and fears we are taking the side of Dr. Plod. Don't be alarmed, my cheerful friend. It is right to flavor your

speech with amusing remarks, just as you put sugar in your coffee. A little sugar, if it is a good article of sugar, without too much sand in it, will sweeten a good-sized cup of coffee. If you drink the (decoction of rye, chestnuts, roots, and other stuff now generally used for) coffee, without sugar, it is very disagreeable. If, on the other hand, you put too much sugar in it, you find a quantity of good-for-nothing sweetening at the bottom of the cup, which the coffee would not dissolve, and which is not useful, either as coffee, sugar, or anything else. So must we season our speech with exactly the right quantity of an excellent article of mirthfulness. If a good joke comes in place to point an illustration with, use it by all means, but take care that neither joke nor illustration are used *only* for the sake of saying something sharp or funny. If the speech is all joke, it is coffee with too much sugar. If too dry and solemn, it is coffee with the sugar left out, and however pure Mocha it may be, nobody wants it, or can enjoy it.

While sweetening our speech with the sugar of pleasant mirthfulness, let us also be careful that it be well seasoned with the salt of divine grace. Otherwise it cannot be written of it, "and the speech pleased the Lord."

CHAPTER XL.

In the Pulpit.

IT is much more the fashion now for ministers to take some notice of the children of their congregation, than it was a good many years ago. Different men have different ways of encouraging their young people. Some pat them on the head or back; some look pleasantly at them; some come into Sunday School and make short or long speeches to them; and some put in every sermon a few sentences so plain that the children can understand them. When the children hear these sentences, they feel that an oasis has been arrived at, in the midst of a dreary wilderness of sermon; while the plain words are being uttered, they wake up, give earnest attention, and often carry home a thought or two of what was said for them.

But the prevalent way of manifesting pastoral interest in children, is to give them, on stated occasions, a special sermon, just for themselves. If this is wisely done, it is an excellent thing. The children understand that it is *their* sermon, and that the big folks, even if they do enjoy a monoply of the preaching at other times, are now sitting under the sound of the gospel only by sufferance. How often these juvenile preachings are to be had, is regulated according to the taste and convenience of the parties preaching and preached to.

It is not equally convenient for all men to come down from the stately step-ladder of adult sermonizing, to the plain and simple business of dispensing gospel milk to babes in Christ. Some, who stand on the very highest step of the ladder, while uttering the regular eloquence of the pulpit, come down a step or two with uncertain footsteps, as if they feared a tumble; and discourse with a constant nervous grasp of the topmost step,

which renders their footing even more uncertain. Some, on the other hand, leap all the way down the ladder, and get into the mud at its base, where they do much floundering about, in their efforts to be simple, and to make the children understand. Some men seem to have the faculty of adapting themselves to children at once; some acquire the art, after long and patient study and practice, with occasionally an utter failure; while some seem never to meet with that success which their laborious efforts deserve.

A young minister, in a town, no matter where, filled his church with children and young people. He made a special business of preaching to them every Sunday afternoon, attending more particularly to the grown people in the morning. The effects were visible on the church of another denomination, on the opposite corner. The pastor of this church was a man of middle age, a very giant in controversial theology, and who preached able, powerful, and very *deep* sermons. He

and his people were distressed that all the young folks should take such a fancy to the preaching of the heterodox little man over the way. They consulted over a plan to bring back the wandering lambs of the flock, and concluded that if their pastor would preach a course of afternoon sermons to children, it would be just the thing. The little man feared, when he heard it announced, that all his young hearers would go to hear the doctor of divinity. And his audience was indeed slim, the first day that the learned man preached. The next Sabbath, the great man had a very thin house, while the junior preacher again had a full attendance. The secret of the matter was, that the young man knew how to preach to children, while the other did not.

Children do not so naturally take to hearing sermons, as to rush in great crowds whenever and wherever it is announced that a sermon will be delivered. On the contrary, the very name of *sermon* is such a bugbear with many young persons, that they will devise almost

any excuse rather than go to hear preaching. It is therefore necessary to hold out some extraordinary inducement to them, in order to make them come and listen. Making them come is one business; making them listen, so as to carry away some good of the discourse, is another. You may drive the children into church, as pigs are driven into a pen, but it does not follow that the preaching will benefit them, *only* because you watched them so sharply that not a single boy got a chance to slip off. Unwilling hearers are very hard hearers to preach to. If the child has the sulks because he was sent to church, he will not carry home a pleasant impression of the sermon, even if it was the best that could be delivered.

How, then, shall we make them come and listen? Simply by making the sermon as attractive as possible. Grown people may come, from a stern sense of duty, to listen to sermons which are as dry as census reports. Children will run away from such unpalatable

repast. But if you take the census report and change its tabular statistics into language of the style of Peter Parley's geography, interspersed with an occasional bit of poetry and a few pictures, the children will devour it, and cry for more. So with the most solid theology. Children might just as well learn it as not. They can be told of every attribute of God, and of God's purposes, and the wonders of his grace in Jesus Christ, far easier in simple language than in profound theologic formula. The sermon must be preached in language that they can understand, full of the right kind of illustrations, and must be delivered in such a way as to secure the steadfast attention of every child in the audience. Then the children will all come, bring their friends, and children and friends together will go home profited as well as interested.

It is not necessary to talk nonsense to children in order to secure their attention. Whatever admiration we may have for Mother Goose in the nursery, let us not make geese

of ourselves by introducing her into the Sunday School or the pulpit.

The sermon should be short. If it is over half an hour, the children will forget the most of it. The other services should be appropriate to the occasion. The prayers may well be shorter than usual; two short prayers will be better than one long one. Never neglect reading the Bible on any preaching occasion, great or small. Sing plenty of hymns, and sing them well. The "childrens' day," will then be one of the most pleasant of all religious exercises, and even the grown people will come to hear what it is that the children listen to, and perhaps to be profited by the absence of that stateliness with which the gospel is sometimes dealt out to them.

CHAPTER XLI.

The Truly Eloquent Speaker.

THE literal meaning of the word *eloquence*, is *speaking out*. The truly eloquent speaker, then, is the man who brings out what he has to say, in such a way that his hearers, great or small, may take hold of it, and appropriate to themselves the good that is contained in it.

Two things are necessary in order that speech may be eloquent; first, that there be something in the speaker, which can be brought out; secondly, that it be brought out in such a way that it shall be good for something when it is out.

The mighty guns, which do the heavy shooting from our iron-clads, are very harmless things when there is no load in them. The enemy may come directly under their muzzles,

and go away in perfect security. They may even shake their fists at the guns, kick them, or put their heads into the capacious bores, as the menagerie man thrusts his head between the gaping jaws of a tame old lion, and remain uninjured. But let the great gun be loaded, and a gunner with lighted match, stand at the touch-hole, and everybody knows what may be expected. Let the worn-out old lion be suddenly restored to his original savage vigor, and loaded up with the juvenile energy which he used to have when he was a little lion, living in a jungle, and he will perform such a crack of the jaws as will leave the headless trunk of the late menagerie man a witness to the recklessness of its owner.

But it is important that the gun be rightly loaded, and with the proper material. You may stuff a fifteen-inch Dahlgren up to the muzzle with snow, and no startling effects will be produced. You may load with solid shot, but if the solid shot have no gunpowder behind it, the getting of it out again will be a

difficult job. If the solid shot is an imperfect one, the probability is that it will go spinning over the country in a vagrant fashion, instead of going directly against what it was intended to hit. Load with a shell, such as some rebel sympathizers, in one of our navy-yards, filled with saw-dust instead of the explosive things with which shells are expected to be filled, and the result is the same as if you fired iron kettles or tin pans at the enemy.

So much for what is put in the gun. Now about getting it out, so as to accomplish something with it.

A good gunner is particular about sighting his gun, and aiming it, so as to carry the missile which it contains exactly to the right spot. It must not be pointed too high or too low, or too much on either side. He must have the apparatus with which he touches it off, in good order, and must apply it just at the right time. If he is firing shell, he must have the fuse so arranged that the explosion will

take place at the right moment of time. Otherwise all his gunnery goes for nothing.

As with firing guns, so with making speeches. The eloquent man does not come to the platform unloaded, and trusting to the force of circumstances to put a load into him. He is careful, before commencing his speech, to prepare his material; to have it of the right kind, and to pack it in the very best way for getting it out effectively. There is no danger that he will merely make a gunpowder flash, and be done. Mr. Empty sometimes makes a flash with startling effect, and some of the people think it is very fine. But it amounts to nothing. The eloquent speaker does not stuff himself up with apologies, coughs, and clearings of the throat, silly jokes, or long-winded and pointless stories, all of which things unhappily constitute the stock in trade of many orators who stand before children.

So he is ready to fire off his load. There is a science in doing it rightly. It is not everybody who is even crammed with knowl-

edge of the finest kind, that can make that knowledge available to youthful hearers. Mr. Slow goes to school all the period of his boyhood, then to college for four years, and to theological seminary for three more; and yet the children of other people whom he tries to address, suspect him of being a great booby. Plenty of learning has been crammed into the man, but it stuck fast, and there is no getting it out. Mr. Poke is exceedingly wise, and writes for the Journal of Science; but when he addresses people, he puts his hands in his pockets, stands on one leg, and hesitates and stammers, till his sleepy audience are ready to exchange him for any person, even of limited attainments, who will interest them, and wake them up. The eloquent man begins in earnest, continues in earnest, and stops when he is done. He keeps his audience awake all the time. They stay awake because they are interested. Being interested, they are apt to be instructed and profitted. The word which is aimed directly at them, goes home to their hearts, and does them good.

Some people suppose that there is some mysterious secret about success in addressing children. This is a mistake. The only science in it, is the science of being perfectly natural, simple, and straight-forward. There is no use of using long or bombastic words to children, when short and easy ones will answer. Admit that children can and do use and understand such long words as *thermometer*, *water-melon*, and the like; is there any use in saying *empyrean*, when we mean *sky?* When we wish to tell them that something is *very bad*, is it necessary to say that it is *overwhelmingly heinous?* If we do use such expressions, the children will be hopelessly confused, and will not remember even enough to ask their parents at home what all these wise things mean. Some kind people may say that these examples are extreme cases; but if they will listen with pencil and paper in hand, to many a Sunday School speech, they will hear words as striking as these. I heard a man who took for a text, in speaking to his

Sunday School, the word "Sin." Surely short enough. But he actually went on to talk to them of the "overwhelming heinousness" of sin! It would have been an interesting experiment to examine the children on their views of sin, after the discourse was over. I heard another man, on another occasion, telling a church full of children, some long stuff about being "potentially saved!"

It is not necessary, on the other hand, to descend, as some infantile reading books do, to words of only three letters. This is inconsistent with true eloquence.

If we had more humility, and more of the child-like simplicity of the gospel, we would succeed better in interesting and instructing the little people who are placed under our care.

CHAPTER XLII.

"And the Speech pleased the Lord." 1 Kings 3: 10.

THIS is the sum of the whole matter This is the true test of the excellence of every address that is made, whether to young persons or to adults. If the speech is acceptable to God, he follows it with his blessing. If it is not well pleasing in his sight, it is of no use, however much the congregation to whom it was addressed may be delighted with it.

It is the custom, however, to measure the excellence of speakers and their speeches by a much lower test. Instead of asking whether the speech, discourse, or sermon was acceptable to God, the common question is, "How did the people like it?" or, "Does he draw a full house?" Instead of asking if it was calculated to do good, the inquiry is often made, "Did he tell any stories?" or, "Did he say

anything funny?" As manufacturers consult the tastes and wishes of the people to whom they expect to sell their goods, so as to find a ready market for them when they are made, it is not surprising that many speakers and preachers of the Word, are led to give the people what they see that the people want. And the peoples' wants vary from time to time. Although the demand for change of style in public addresses is hardly as capricious as that for change in style of bonnets or coats, yet there is continual change. Our forefathers would sit on oaken benches, in houses of worship in which it was thought sinful to erect stoves, even in the coldest weather; two weary hours would be spent in giving heed to a discourse, often as dry as it was long. Things have changed. A discourse of that length is now cut into about three, and given to the hearers in such sizes and shapes as can be more readily taken in. Instead of the frigidity and oaken hardness of the surroundings of worship, it is the fashion

to sit on cushioned seats, with comfortable backs. The demand which probably existed in those days for dullness in style and matter, has perceptibly abated. If a speaker were to rise, after the manner of the forefather preachers, and tell us that he would now proceed to treat his subject by dividing it into six heads, each of which heads would be sub-divided into four particulars, and each particular again divided into subordinate heads, numbered firstly, secondly, and thirdly; if said preacher were then to go on to do all this, what a surprising effect would be produced on a congregation of worshippers in this fast age of smart speakers, cushioned benches, and warmed meeting houses. And if one of the sensation speakers of modern times had stood before a Massachusetts congregation of 1663, his hearers would have been startled out of their propriety, and would have wondered what the man was about. It would be an interesting subject for discussion, which sort of discourse is most acceptable to God;

for, strange as the olden time sermon may seem to us, we cannot deny that some of our forefathers attained a degree of godliness, which, to say the least of it, is not surpassed by the hearers of modern preaching and speaking.

It is not, then, only the style and matter of the speech that concerns its usefulness or excellence. There is something behind the words we say which is even more important than the discourse itself; though the congregation may not be able to perceive it, or to judge of its quality if they do. "Let the words of my mouth, *and the meditation of my heart*, be acceptable in thy sight, O, Lord, my strength and my Redeemer." What is in our heart controls and regulates that which we utter. It may be high-sounding eloquence to the ears of those who hear; if it come not from the heart, it is as empty froth. It may not specially tickle the ear, or please the fancy, and yet, if its motive is good, God accepts it, and blesses it both to hearers and speaker.

The great duty in preparing and delivering a discourse of any kind, from an infant-school talk to a sermon, is to see that our hearts are right in the sight of God; that what we select to say is that which will honor God; that we may say just those things which will lead our hearers to increased godliness; and that we speak in such a way as to make them hear and remember; for if what we say is God's message, we have no right to deliver it in such a way as to produce no impression.

We serve a just God. He is not a hard master. He puts upon us no more task than we can accomplish, but he expects us to do our work well. He gives us material and tools, and expects us to use our material to the best advantage, and to keep our tools in excellent order. He gives us his message to deliver to our perishing fellow sinners. It does not please him if we give them something else instead of it. It does not please him if we mangle the message, so that they cannot understand it, or tell it in such a stupid way that they go to sleep instead of listening to it.

It is no light business to give the word of eternal life to our fellow creatures, even though they be little children. There is a weighty responsibility assumed with every speech that is delivered. Let us seek to bear this responsibility worthily, "not handling the word of God deceitfully; but, by manifestations of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." So, when we speak, we shall speak the words of wisdom, and speak them wisely, and, even though we may not so much delight the itching ears of those who seek only amusement and entertainment, we will have the better record on high, "And the speech pleased the Lord."

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